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THE  
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# THE STRUCTURE OF MORALE

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## PREFACE

FOR some two years there have been sent to the Psychological Laboratory in Cambridge groups, first of officers and training regiments and then of A.T.S., to receive instruction chiefly in technical methods of selection and training of personnel. I was asked to lecture to them on subjects of a more general nature and, at first, I gave them talks on the subjects they proposed. It soon appeared that they were all interested chiefly in the same problems and the lectures became a routine discussion of the same topics. From the first, it was asked by members of the classes that the lectures should be published and the demand was sufficiently consistent for me to consider it. But pressure of other work made the task of writing them up impossible until some time could be stolen for this purpose during the past few months.

There is but one excuse for stating these facts. The general principles laid down in this book are the same as those given in the earliest lectures. The illustrations used refer, chiefly, to experiences we have had since those first lectures were delivered. What were then predictions are now a matter of history. This, of course, does not constitute proof in any proper scientific sense, but it at least creates a presumption of validity for the theories propounded.

Finally, I wish to express my deep thanks to Mr Herbert Jones for his tireless skill in the dull task of editing and correcting the typescript for publication.

J. T. M.





## Part I. FEAR



### CHAPTER I

#### *PASSIVE ADAPTATION TO DANGERS*

THE logical way in which to begin a discussion of fear would be to say just what fear was. That, however, is beyond me and, I believe, something that no psychologist can do—at least to the satisfaction of other psychologists. No more can he define ‘love’. The layman may be surprised at this because, of course, *he* knows. But the specialist is often at such a disadvantage. In his famous lecture on *The Name and Nature of Poetry* Professor Housman said: ‘Poetry indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual. A year or two ago, in common with others, I received from America a request that I would define poetry. I replied that I could no more define poetry than a terrier could define a rat, but that I thought we both recognized the object by the symptoms which it provokes in us.’ We all of us know what it is to be frightened.

But are there different kinds or grades of fear? Our language would seem to indicate that there are. ‘I am anxious to have a good holiday’ implies no thought of danger and so must be merely some kind of a metaphor, a reference to strong feeling. ‘I am afraid it will rain’ again indicates no apprehension of peril, only an anticipation of discomfort unless protective action be taken. Something much more poignant is experienced by the rider who says ‘I am always afraid of the first fence’. Does he envisage broken bones or is it just the ‘needle’, a state of unpleasant tension while waiting for any kind of an ordeal? This kind of apprehension is certainly compatible with unimpaired efficiency; it may even be a prelude to exceptional performance. On the other hand, who has not had to confess after some

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emergency, 'I was too frightened to do anything'; or a similar inhibition may prevent one from 'taking the plunge' even when judgment tells one there is no danger.

Clearly, then, the term fear covers many different kinds of subjective experience and a range of efficiency in action extending from zero to the maximum of which the individual is capable. The psychologist is interested in all of these and in the ways in which they are interrelated but the soldier or the air-raid warden is not. Only one form of fear is important for him—the terror that paralyses or leads to panic. So we shall concentrate our attention on it.

What is the occasion for this terror? To this the layman can make a ready answer, particularly if he has never pondered the problem. Fear is the natural, and therefore a reasonable, response to danger. But is it? Let us consider some common examples. If the formula is correct fear ought to be proportionate to knowledge of the danger, to a realization of the risks involved. Who know so well as nurses and doctors the dangers from infections? But how many of them are afraid of patients with contagious diseases? Is the policeman or the private citizen the more frightened of burglars, the fireman or the householder of fire? Except during a Blitz season motor cars kill many more people than bombs. But who is afraid of traffic? These are all of them real dangers. But there are also what are, technically, called phobias, fears of agencies that are merely potentially, not actually, dangerous. Shew me a man or woman who is not afraid of high places, of open spaces, of enclosed places, of fire, drowning or lightning stroke, of cancer, tuberculosis, or some other disease of which he exhibits no symptoms, or of animals large or small, with no legs or many legs, or loud noises or the sight of blood—shew me such a man and I will shew you a very rare creature. So everyone is a coward. But each of us admires the courage of others who are indifferent to the terrors that assail us. So we must all be courageous.

It does not look as if there were any standard degree of danger correlated with a standard degree of fear; the extent to which a given

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danger affects a man seems to be an individual affair. But even here we get into difficulties. How many people in this country can say that they are neither more nor less afraid of bombs than they were before the Blitz began? Yet a bomb is, potentially, just as dangerous as it always was. We know that—we always have—but with experience our fear goes up or down. During the last war practically every soldier was frightened when first exposed to bombardment, but the vast majority grew accustomed to it quite quickly. They did not cease to regard shells as lethal agencies, they merely ceased to be frightened by them. These are dramatic examples. But for generations it has been proverbial that the countryman was terrified by the traffic when he *first* came to town. If habituation did not abolish, or at least reduce, fear, we should have fewer traffic accidents.

It is thus clear that fear is not proportionate to the actual risk of injury. Moreover, those who know the danger best are, as a rule, those who are least frightened. Who knows better than the tamer how vicious a lion can be? So it looks as if fear was illogical, irrational. But is it therefore lawless? Here is where psychology comes in.

Psychology recognizes that there are two great divisions, or categories, in human mental life. There is the conscious rational mind of intelligence and the unconscious illogical mind of instinct or emotion. All available evidence seems to support the view that consciousness, with its critical analysis of the environment and its capacity to reason about cause and effect, is a prerogative of the human species. Some of its attributes may appear sporadically and in rudimentary form among the higher animals, but their lives are governed by appetites, instincts and habits. This does not mean that they cannot learn by experience. They do; but only to behave differently, not to have 'knowledge' of the environment in anything like our sense of the term. Man has gained some measure of knowledge of the universe about him with a commensurate control over it—of which he is arrogantly proud—in virtue of consciousness and

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the capacities that go with it. We like to think that our minds can compass the universe and that our reason—the conscious knowledge we can summon and the behaviour we can control—dominates our mental life. These are illusions. We like to think that we have left the animal behind, whereas we have merely developed a reason that may be employed in the service of the animal that survives in us and calls the tune we dance to. True this is, relatively, a very superior animal, one capable of transforming crude lusts into lofty ideals, but the loves, hates and fears which direct our energies do not come from a reasoning consciousness but from our ‘animal’ minds. The intelligence of our greatest philosopher cannot tell us why we want to live or escape death, he cannot explain to us what happiness is that we should pursue it. If the emotional side of our lives belongs to the mind that we share with animals, then the most favourable field in which to discover the laws which govern emotions should be animal psychology. Our findings there will not be confused by the complications which consciousness produces.

Fear (except in pathological cases that do not concern us here) is always associated with some sign or thought of danger. It is not the suffering which injury causes but an anticipation of it. It is a kind of crying before one is hurt. But we have seen that, emotionally, we behave both as if we were certain to be hurt and that we never could be. Do animals have similar anticipatory reactions? Do they learn to respond to signals or come to neglect them? They do and, indeed, there is no aspect of animal mentality that has been more thoroughly explored. This learning and unlearning is what is called the ‘conditioned reflex’ or, better, the ‘conditioned reaction’. It was first reported by the great English physiologist Sherrington, but a thoroughgoing exploration of the field was begun by the Russian Pavlov and his colleagues. During the past quarter-century it has been intensively studied in all laboratories engaged in animal psychology. Our present knowledge of the conditioned reaction is extensive and highly detailed, but I shall do no more than describe

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some of the basic findings which are as well established as the phenomena on which the atomic theory in chemistry is founded.

Here is a typical example. Some neutral stimulus is given to a dog, say the blowing of a whistle. The dog looks up and around. While in this attitude of attention he is presented with a bit of meat. He approaches this, he seizes it in his mouth, saliva flows, he bites it into pieces small enough to swallow and swallows it. Nothing remarkable in this, one would say, and it seems to be a complete enough description of what has happened. Yet it is incomplete. Something has happened that inevitably escapes detection, something that betrays itself only later. The dog has begun to associate in his mind the sound of a whistle with being fed. The sequence whistle-meat is repeated a number of times and then the whistle is blown without any meat being offered. One would expect—on the basis of human behaviour—that the dog would now go about looking, sniffing for the meat he had a right to expect. Not a bit of it. Instead of such reasonable behaviour he proceeds with the total behaviour he has previously rehearsed: he looks up when the whistle blows, waits for the same number of seconds as he has previously waited for the meat and then goes through all the pantomime of eating meat that is not there! This is the conditioned reaction. The easiest part of the response to measure is the watering of his mouth and, indeed, that is the most constant and enduring symptom: a sound has become the stimulus for salivation, an association between sound and food has been built up; it is irrational, but it is compelling.

All animal learning seems to be fundamentally of this nature, but before we superciliously dismiss the poor animal as a stupid brute we should pause to ask ourselves what the difference is between this canine performance and the baby who opens its mouth when it sees a bottle or our own behaviour when we go to the dining-room when a bell is rung. Careful observation and experiment fail to reveal any difference in nature between the baby's and the dog's behaviour; they are on the same mental level. The dog stays there, the baby does

## RELEVANT LAWS OF CONDITIONING

not. The latter grows into the man who goes to the dining-room and this behaviour records a big advance. There is the same basic conditioned response, but it is dealt with in a human way. Instead of behaving as if he saw the food in front of him the man realizes that he is merely thinking of it, that he has been reminded of it; he remembers (thanks to another conditioning process) that the bell means food in a distant place to which he repairs. It is man's consciousness which enables him to discriminate between his memory of something and the thing itself; with the memory—thought or image—consciousness can deal critically, accurately, logically. But if the conditioned response is a strange, unlocalized feeling, consciousness cannot grasp it and so cannot control it. Man's mental evolution is incomplete, he cannot yet exert conscious scrutiny of his instincts and emotions—they 'just happen'. However, we must examine more of the phenomena of conditioning before we can appreciate its full significance for human emotions.

Having trained the dog to salivate whenever he hears the whistle blow we might imagine that this would now constitute a permanent change in him. But this is not the case. It is found that, if the experimenter keeps repeating the noise without ever giving the dog any meat, his mouth waters less and less; finally, there is no response and, indeed, the disillusioned animal may shew his boredom by going to sleep when the whistle blows. This is called 'extinction' of the conditioned response and it occurs whenever the signal is given repeatedly without 'reinforcement', i.e. the periodical presentation of the meat which will keep the conditioned response going.<sup>1</sup>

With reinforcement and extinction we can make or unmake con-

<sup>1</sup> Extinction and reinforcement shew how the conditioned response is useful to an animal. Purely accidental conjunction of unrelated stimuli do not recur repeatedly outside the psychological laboratory or when the animal trainer is at work. If a dog is fed regularly in the kitchen that is not an accident and, if he is thus conditioned to go there when hungry, he has learned something that is useful. Similarly, if he frequently picks up the trail of a rabbit in a given field he is conditioned to hunt there. If, however, the rabbits are all killed off there, the response will soon be extinguished.

## RELEVANT LAWS OF CONDITIONING

ditioned responses at will and this makes possible an experimental achievement of great theoretic importance. This is what is called 'differentiation'. A wealth of evidence shews that the dog responds originally to the 'altogetherness' of the surroundings, including what we should at once identify as the specific stimulus or signal. It is not just the whistle: it is the whistle in that room, blown by that man and so on. An apparently well-established conditioned reaction may not appear in unfamiliar surroundings. Moreover, although a particular whistle may always be used, any other whistle will do as well. He can be trained, however, to respond to one, highly specific, stimulus. This is accomplished by a combination of reinforcement and extinction, the specific stimulus is followed by feeding while the attendant or similar stimulus is not. The dog then is confirmed in his reaction to the specific stimulus, while he loses response to others. For instance, a whistle having a pitch of the middle C in a piano is blown, the animal fed and thus conditioning to a whistle is established. If, now, a whistle having a pitch one octave higher is sounded, the dog salivates. But if no meat is ever given when the higher note has been heard response to that stimulus will die away. Clearly the animal can discriminate between notes an octave apart, but can he do better? So two whistles only half an octave apart are chosen. Again the differentiation is made. Then to a third, a twelfth and so on until the limit is reached. Thus the differentiation experiment gives us a method of determining what are the sensory capacities of animals, animals who cannot tell us directly what they see, hear or smell. In this way it has been shewn that a dog can tell the difference between two musical pitches at least as well as the average man, that he can discriminate between a circle and an ellipse that is nearly a circle with equal ability. Similarly, he can distinguish between two greys the brightnesses of which seem to the human eye to be identical. But when he is tried with colours he is a total loss. The dog is colour blind, a fact to which we shall have to refer later. For our present purposes, however, we need only note from these differ-



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entiation experiments that originally the linkage of the salivation is with a large generalized situation out of which the appearance of any one of its elements might serve to liberate the response, but that, after appropriate training, any element may be made the sole effective stimulus while the others are treated with indifference.

Thus we learn that animals learn to obey arbitrary signals, that they can lose the habit, and that they can be made to discriminate only one out of a large number of possible signals. Are these phenomena exhibited in the occurrence, or absence, of human fear? They are, and they are exhibited with clearness in the reaction of civilians to bombing.

The story of our being taught to have terror of bombs, to cry before we were hurt, begins a long way back; during the last war, in fact. During that war a considerable portion of our total population gained considerable experience of shell-fire and bullets, enough for it to have developed a fatalistic attitude towards them—it took 1400 shells to kill a man (or so it has been stated) and as 1400 to 1 is long odds on escape, why worry? But few people, either in or out of uniform, experienced heavy bombing. However, the war ended with the bomber becoming fast a weapon of considerable significance. How far would this development go? Aeroplanes were developing higher speeds and longer effective ranges; bombs were becoming heavier. Civilians were practically all agreed that when and if another war came, the bomber would be a major weapon, regardless of whatever international conventions to ban them might be adopted in the interval. (If the military mind had been similarly moved, anticipation of German tactics might have been more accurate and effective.) Further, there was universal expectation of bombing of civilian targets in order to break morale on the Home Front. But how serious a matter would this be?

Left to themselves the great British people—like others—tend to assume an ostrich attitude and to minimize, rather than magnify, remote dangers. But they were not left to themselves. Two agencies

## AS A CONDITIONED REACTION

(at least) were unwittingly operating to rivet the mere thought of bombing with terror. The first of these was pacifist propaganda. Not content with preaching the wickedness and futility of war the pacifists made an appeal to fear. The argument ran: war will kill you, maim you or ruin you; if you don't care about what happens to your own carcase, what about your wife and babies? Bombs were made the symbol of war's wanton carnage and women and children the symbols of the innocent.<sup>1</sup> This propaganda reinforced whatever anticipation there may have been as to civilians being targets for enemy bombers. The second agency was Hollywood aviation films. Many of these included shots of bombing. For obvious dramatic reasons this bombing had two characteristics. Every bomb hit its target and, when it did so, destruction was complete. Here was vivid, realistic proof of what was feared. To be in a target area would mean certain death or hideous mutilation. The only possible means of survival were absence from the area or shelter so deep underground that even these seismic explosions could not reach one. Otherwise there would be nothing one could do and, as we shall see later, there is nothing so conducive to fear as not knowing what to do.

This, then, was the background, the psychological preparation we all had for bombing. So firmly was the association bomb-immolation fixed in our minds that we paid no attention to countervailing evidence. We read in the press that peoples as different as Spaniards and Chinese had adapted themselves to bombing; were they braver than the British? No one asked that question and the Government (I understand) made such preparations as it could to deal with mass panics. No more attention was paid to the significance of the reports of repeated bombing of the same areas. Did the first air-raid completely destroy Barcelona or Chungking? How did it come that there

<sup>1</sup> On the night before this war began I was present at a discussion in a mixed gathering about what was going to happen. Someone asked, would we bomb Berlin? Another stated that he had heard the women and children were already evacuated from Berlin. Then a good lady, intelligent, wife of a cabinet minister, asked: 'What would be the use of bombing Berlin if there were no women and children there?' *Ab uno disce omnes.*

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were either buildings or people left after many heavy raids? The statement was even published (although not prominently) that during its worst year there were more people killed in Barcelona by motors than by bombs. We went on believing, or at least feeling, that an air-raid meant a holocaust. As the war clouds gathered, preparations, both public and private, were made to meet possible air-raids and we were told that sirens would be sounded when enemy bombers approached. So the siren—not the mythical seductive maiden but a sound as of lost souls being dragged to hell—the siren was established as a signal for what? Not for retreat to a place of security but to a flimsy shelter; as a rule, a shelter that would give little protection against a direct hit, and our imaginations had been nurtured on visions of direct hits.

We all remember what happened when the war did come and the sirens first sounded. There was little panic, it is true, but the great majority of the populace scurried to their shelters with little confidence of ever seeing daylight again; not with the expectation of safety but in a spirit of obedience to Government orders. As one friend of mine described it: 'When the first siren sounded I took my children to our dug-out in the garden and I was quite certain we were all going to be killed. Then the all-clear went without anything having happened. Ever since we came out of the dug-out I have felt sure nothing would ever hurt us.' Her conviction of imminent death was probably deeper than that of the average and her swing to a belief in invulnerability was certainly more rapid, but otherwise her case is typical. With most people the swing was gradual. When the siren had sounded a number of times, no bombs had dropped and no planes had even been heard, there was boredom in the shelters and curiosity appeared. More adventurous spirits ventured out to have a look, soon to be followed by their companions. Then even curiosity vanished until eventually—if warnings were frequent—many, perhaps the majority of the population could not say whether a warning was in operation or not.

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What is the explanation of this change? The intelligent layman would say: 'Oh, it's just a case of "Wolf! Wolf!".' The psychologist explains it cumbrously as the extinction of a conditioned reaction. Has the latter formula any advantage that might compensate for its academic turgidity? It has. Fables and adages embody many psychological truths, but they do not express them as general principles which could be applied in prediction—the touchstone of science. 'Out of sight, out of mind' and 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder' are both truisms, but does either assist one in making a prediction as to the result of some parting? So, clumsy though it may be, we will stick to our psychological formula. The signal was repeated without reinforcement and, *inevitably*, the conditioned emotion was dissociated from the signal. The formal significance of the siren, 'There are enemy bombers in the region', was precisely what it always had been; Government instructions had not been altered; the one difference was an emotional one, which is an excellent illustration of meaning being, pragmatically, as much an emotional as an intellectual matter.

Months went past and no bombs fell. During this period a new mental attitude developed. Superficially, at least, the pre-war apprehension of bombing disappeared. An ostrich philosophy grew up, A.R.P. and fire services were neglected while Home Security cudgelled its brains in an effort to find some way of injecting into citizens the need for eternal vigilance. Then some real, albeit sporadic bombing began. The results of this are important to consider, for they were a surprise to the layman although predictable on the basis of the laws of conditioning of emotions and, indeed, were thus predicted.

Whenever a bomb explodes in a congested area it divides the population who can hear it or see its effects into three groups. The first is those who are killed. The morale of the community depends on the reaction of the survivors, so from that point of view, the killed do not matter. Put this way the fact is obvious, corpses do not run

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about spreading panic, but the fact, important though it is, is rarely stated or reckoned with. We are concerned with the survivors, and they can be divided into two groups, which may be called the 'Near-misses' and the 'Remote-misses'.

The near-misses are the people who are in the immediate vicinity of the bomb; they feel the blast, they see the destruction, are horrified by the carnage, perhaps they are wounded, but they survive—deeply impressed. 'Impression' means, here, a powerful reinforcement of the fear reaction in association with bombing. It may result in 'shock', a loose term that covers anything from a dazed state or actual stupor to jumpiness and pre-occupation with the horrors that have been witnessed; or there may be merely—in tougher specimens—a vivid reminder of the reality of bombs. (The numerical size of this group will depend, naturally, on a variety of factors, particularly communal morale, which will be discussed later.) In the near-miss group are those who have been mentally incapacitated by bombing or are, at least, shaken. Their attitude is: 'The next one will get me'; or, 'Will the next one get me?'

In marked contrast are those in the remote-miss group. They hear the sirens, they hear the enemy planes (possibly identifying them as such), perhaps they hear some A.A. fire and then comes the thud (or sometimes crack) of a bomb explosion. This, at last, is the real thing. There is tense waiting for the next ones—will they come nearer? They don't. The all-clear sounds and it seems to be all over. Psychologically it has not ended; indeed the experience was just the beginning of a new mental attitude. The survivor goes through such phases as the following: 'It has happened and I'm safe.' Then there is curiosity as what has actually happened, eager questioning and speculation. Often there is a visit to the scene of destruction. Frequently this is found to be no more than a hole in a cabbage field. In that case the old fear that all bombs would find their mark is dissipated. Or there was some damage done. But the bodies have been removed, the sight is singularly like the pictures one has seen

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of Spanish houses after a bombing attack. That was a remote catastrophe and so, emotionally, is this. There is a contrast between the actuality of the destruction of others and one's own scathelessness. Of all the signals of danger the sound of the bomb's explosion is the most vivid and with it has been associated not the previous anticipation of destruction but the actual experience of successful escape. The emotion now conditioned with the signal is a feeling of excitement with a flavour of invulnerability.

This latter component is most important in the development of individual morale. It is elaborated in two directions. The first is fatalism either as a conscious philosophy or merely as an attitude of resignation to the vagaries of fortune that are so unpredictable, so beyond understanding or control, that it is futile to worry about them.<sup>1</sup> The second is an elaboration of the feeling of relief at escape. We are all of us not merely liable to fear, we are also prone to be afraid of being afraid, and the conquering of fear produces exhilaration—hence the joy of adventure. When we have been afraid that we may panic in an air-raid, and, when it has happened, we have

<sup>1</sup> A general principle seems to be that we doubt our powers of resistance to shocks we have never known but are progressively less and less frightened as we continue to survive a series of such shocks. This is probably the explanation for the geographical distribution of fatalism. Eastern peoples, having advanced less than Westerners in material culture and its attendant opportunity for individual expression, have repeatedly experienced the ravages of flood, famine, frost and pestilence, as well as the oppression of tyrants. Nothing can be done about it, so far as they know, so the survival they have achieved is consciously or unwittingly assigned to the vagaries of fortune. Therefore they are fatalists. But they have another characteristic as well. The trial we have endured is less terrifying than the one we have never met. The average Westerner may have known what it was to be hungry or to be cold; he may have seen floods but something was done to control them, he has seen epidemics but medical science knows how to combat them. The Easterner has, impotently, suffered and survived. What one has experienced and escaped is no longer terrifying. Hence the fatalistic oriental is not so frightened of misery as we are. Hitler should have thought of this before he attacked the Russians, who are largely Asiatic in origin and outlook. They are not to be frightened by the carnage of a Blitz or the destitution that follows in its wake. Strange though it may seem, every war shews that the majority of people can quickly learn to face the prospect of death. But Westerners cannot face the prospect of misery. The Russians can: they do not imagine its worst because they know it.

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exhibited to others nothing but a calm exterior and we are now safe, the contrast between the previous apprehension and the present relief and feeling of security promotes a self-confidence that is the very father and mother of courage. If we have been told that the enemy's purpose was to throw us into panic and there is public praise for our fortitude, then the unexpected discovery that we are heroic is confirmed. A not unimportant factor contributory to the glow of heroism is the knowledge that merely by not panicking we have foiled the enemy and therefore hit back.

If the remote-miss person has more courage after a raid than before it, if courage, like fear, is contagious, and if the near-miss group in any community is small, it follows that a light, a 'token' bombing must improve morale in that community. Innumerable Home Security reports attest the truth of this conclusion as I have been told. The borough that has been panicky and troublesome with its demands for deep shelters to house the whole population and so on, after having been visited by the Luftwaffe, sticks out its chest and says: 'We are on the map now; we can take it.' The same phenomenon is, of course, a military truism. Troops that have never been under fire cannot be relied upon with confidence. But when they have had a few casualties they are steadied and, interestingly enough, discipline improves.

All of this is, of course, of one piece with the general irrationality of emotions. As we have seen, fear, if rational, should be in proportion to the risks encountered. The future chances of survival of any individual are not affected by his proximity to, or distance from, a bomb that has exploded. So far as any single individual is concerned a miss is, mathematically, as good as a mile. Emotionally it is not. But if one is hit while others escape, it is not a total miss for the group, which suffers in proportion to the number of hits scored. So, if the casualty rate be taken to measure risk—which is not irrational—the proportion of fear to courage in the population will correspond to the relative sizes of the near- and remote-miss groups.

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The size of these groups varying with the weight of bombing, it follows that the morale of the community—only so far as it rests on this passive adaptation, of course—is a rational emotional reaction, which is a queer paradox.

These phenomena have considerable significance for the strategy of bombing in so far as psychological considerations enter therein. We owe much to German ignorance in these matters. They believe, rightly, in the potency of terror and exploit it with characteristic thoroughness. But they have not studied—or studied sufficiently—the ways in which various peoples may adapt themselves to danger or respond to its threat. The Luftwaffe spent months in building up morale here by its ‘token’ bombing before it launched the real Blitz. And as for threats. . . well, the British are the proudest people in the world: never since Norman and Saxon were welded into one nation have they known permanent defeat, while they are accustomed to initial reverses; a threat to them is either a silly joke or a challenge. Conditioned by his history, the Englishman relies slothfully on the myth of invincibility until he is hit and hit hard. What is for less happy peoples the symbol of subjugation and the signal for terror is the one effective stimulus to him. Here is where the ‘war of nerves’ was playing our game. The stimuli of Dunkirk and the air Blitz were reinforced by telling us to be frightened. The ‘We can take it’ attitude became a defeat for the Hitler-Goering-Goebbels combine.

It is possible to formulate two principles about the psychological efficiency of bombing based on conclusions so far reached. First, since morale deteriorates chiefly in the near-miss group, it should be made as large as possible. This is accomplished by repeated heavy attacks on one area the size of which is determined by the number of bombs available. The more nearly the local destruction is to being complete, the more certain is it that every survivor is a near-miss. Second, the reduction of morale consequent on this type of attack will vary with the size of the bombed area relative to that occupied by the population which considers itself a unit. If the area is so large



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or the community so small that all its members are affected, then everyone is either a near-miss or exposed to the contagion of fear from the shaken victims. On the other hand in a large city, if there is a feeling of civic unity and if morale is otherwise good, the task of turning the majority of the population into near-misses is prodigious. London is, perhaps, better situated to resist psychological bombing than any other city in the world, because its area is so huge and yet it is a unit in its *esprit de corps*. Wipe out one borough and the gap is hardly seen in a bird's-eye view of London and its suburbs. Neither economically nor socially is that borough a self-contained area, which means that even if every burgher were a near-miss his contacts would be largely with remote-miss people. The futility of the attacks on London morale are known to the world. In October 1940 I had occasion to drive through South-East London just after a series of attacks on that district. Every hundred yards or so, it seemed, there was a bomb crater or wreckage of what had once been a house or shop. The siren blew its warning and I looked to see what would happen. A nun seized the hand of a child she was escorting and hurried on. She and I seemed to be the only ones who had heard the warning. Small boys continued to play all over the pavements, shoppers went on haggling, a policeman directed traffic in majestic boredom and the bicyclists defied death and the traffic laws. No one, so far as I could see, even looked into the sky.

One is tempted to make some guesses as to the moral effect on Germans of R.A.F. bombing raids. They had the worst of all possible preparations in having been assured that no enemy aeroplane could penetrate their defences. According to a number of authors who were in Germany in 1940 disillusionment on this point caused a good deal of disquiet. Although this may have planted the seed of a defeatism that will germinate later, it is probable that the average citizen thinks little now about how he was deceived. All of our bombing has been ostensibly of purely military objectives and has probably been so actually in a degree sufficient to demonstrate our

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intention. This means that there has been a great density of bombs on the selected targets, so we can be sure there are in them a majority of near-miss subjects. This must mean shaken morale in those communities that are purely industrial in the sense that the buildings are preponderantly factories and adjacent workmen's dwellings. It will be difficult to recruit labour for these areas. On the other hand, there will be in large cities like Bremen and Hamburg a condition not duplicated in Britain at all. A relatively small part of the total urban area must have been largely destroyed. If the dock workers live chiefly close to the docks, we may be sure that their morale is at least shaken. If, however, they live some distance away, we should be unwise to count on any material weakening of their zeal in doing their bit to win the war. So far as the non-dock areas are concerned, the more accurately the R.A.F. accomplish their mission the more will the near-miss zone be geographical as well as psychological. The Hamburger who lives a mile or more from the wharves will have had his fear reactions extinguished except for such apprehension as there may be of a change in R.A.F. policy. That threat will have been intensified by demonstration of what British bombs can do. Berlin, however, is in quite a different position. No area of considerable size has been pulverized so as to serve as an object lesson, while the total number of bombs which it has been possible to transport such a long distance is small as compared with the total area of Berlin and the largeness of its population. It is, I believe, practically certain that Berlin morale has been improved by such attention as the R.A.F. has given it.<sup>1</sup> One important factor must be borne in mind. The

<sup>1</sup> The treatment of R.A.F. raids by German propaganda is perhaps worth attention. There is a consistent denial of destruction of military objectives with occasional admission of loss of civilian life or property. If we presume that the Germans believe what Goebbels tells them—the wiser presumption—the effect of this information will be good so long as morale on other grounds is high. Human loss is preferable to military loss. But, in so far as rumour spreads stories of military damage having been accomplished, faith in Goebbels will be undermined. On the other hand, if the average German is beginning to worry about his own skin, then propaganda is assuring him that what he fears is happening.

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more complete is any destruction the better story it makes. We may be sure that gossip is carrying about Germany tales of how terrific R.A.F. bombs are. These stories are going to people who, probably by the million (thanks to R.A.F. policy), have never heard a bomb explosion. The untouched have not had their fear reactions extinguished and rumour will reinforce them. It is sound psychological policy not to hit until you can hit hard.

We have considered the relevance of the principles governing the establishment and extinction of conditioned reactions to the nexus of fear with bombing. There remains the principle of differentiation of stimuli. As has been explained, conditioning at first is to a general situation in animals. This phenomenon is not so marked in human conditioning because the human mind is inveterately analytic and tends to link specific causes with particular effects. As a result of this analysis of the environment man tends quickly to attach his emotion to some single stimulus, or some small group of them, and makes this a signal. Thus his differentiation is more of a movement from one stimulus to another—each being conditioned and then extinguished—than simply a matter of slowly discovering what is the essential and invariably recurring stimulus to which the emotion is finally attached.

It is important to recognize that the invariable appearance of one phenomenon before another does not mean that the first causes the second. The shaft of sunlight which comes into a room when a blind is rolled up does not produce the dust that is then seen, although many housewives think so. But this *post hoc ergo propter hoc* is the only logic known by an animal and it also governs our emotions. On the other hand it is a better logic than none at all, for there may be some causal connection between the two events. On the whole differentiation of stimuli which excite fear is useful. If only one signal is differentiated from a mass of sensory impressions, there is less fear, because the specific stimulus recurs infrequently. If a series of such stimuli are conditioned and then extinguished, there is a considerable

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probability that the emotion will be aroused by something that is a real and not an accidental signal. Two examples of emotional adaptation to danger by means of differentiation of stimuli will make these points clear.

The first is one already referred to—that of the soldier under shell-fire in the last war: he was frightened at first but soon got used to it. The most important element in this habituation was the discovery that the shell that was coming close made a characteristic noise. Often this was a conscious observation, but frequently it was merely a matter of involuntary behaviour. In either case the soldier took what protective action he could when the ‘near-miss’ was heard but became indifferent to all other noises. (The value of this differentiation was shewn, negatively, in those who developed anxiety states. An early symptom was the loss of this adaptation. The victim then felt that every shell he heard was coming right at him so that, on an active front, his life was one long nightmare.)

The second example is of the changes that have occurred in effectiveness of various bombing signals. They have all been sounds heard and have originated from home defence measures as well as enemy activity. The first was, of course, the siren and we have already seen how it lost its emotional significance. Then came the sound of aeroplanes. This was, psychologically, an interesting phase. There were many disputes between those who claimed to be able to identify enemy planes and those who denied that they made any distinctive noise. The reason for this conflict of opinion is not far to seek if one remembers the basic principles of differentiation. Discrimination of stimuli is effected by reinforcement of one stimulus with absence of reinforcement for another similar but not identical stimulus. In this case reinforcement could come from the additional sound of bombs when German planes alone had been heard—a rare occurrence with so many of our own machines in the sky—or from official information as to the presence or absence of enemy raiders in a particular part of the sky relative to the observer. The members of the Observer Corps

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alone have enjoyed this latter advantage and they have learned the characteristic noises made by enemy as well as friendly aeroplanes. Another way of achieving the identification is to learn the silhouettes and sounds of our own aircraft and then to recognize the strangeness of the noise made by the enemy who is usually in the dark or flying at such a height as to be invisible or unidentifiable. Small boys, whose interest is intense and whose sensory faculties are more educable than in later life, are particularly good at this kind of performance. The vast majority of people, however, lack the time, interest and sensory acuity needed for this route of differentiation and so have failed to achieve any. As a result nervous subjects have heard an enemy bomber whenever an aeroplane—or even a distant motor bicycle—was audible, while the average citizen has become emotionally inert to the sound of aeroplanes. I should expect, however, that in some—particularly coastal—areas a considerable number of people have witnessed enough low attacks from visible bombers to have learned to identify their characteristic sound.

Another signal of imminent bombing is anti-aircraft gun fire. The emotional meaning of this must necessarily be complicated because it is primarily a sign of retaliation and only secondarily, and unintentionally, a warning. Again, as an indication of the nearness of the enemy it must vary with the type of gun. Fire from a light A.A. battery that guards a vulnerable point necessarily implies a likelihood of bombs falling in a restricted area and anyone who neglects that warning does so at his peril. On the other hand heavy batteries, such as are used in barrages to protect huge areas like that of London, may be firing at aeroplanes whose course is many miles away. The first discrimination learned in connection with the noise of A.A. guns in action is between the crack of the gun and the thud of the bomb and this is quickly acquired. Will the recognized sound of the gun then produce fear or not? This will probably depend chiefly on earlier experience. If there is already some familiarity with air-raids when defence has been purely passive, the sound of guns is reassuring.

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At last A.A. is doing something about it. On the other hand, and particularly if the subject is not hardened to bombing, the sound of gun fire is apt to take the place of the siren as a signal for fear. The sirens often sound and nothing happens but, if the guns are at it, there must be planes near. In a 'Blitz season', however, the conditioning of fear with the sound of guns is quickly extinguished because the sequence gun-nearby bomb is so rare as compared with the experience of gun fire followed by only distant bombs or none at all.

Finally,<sup>1</sup> there remains the most urgent of all signals, namely the sound of a falling bomb. The swishing, whistling noise it makes is quickly learned and is unmistakable. Data as to the actual relation between this sound, the direction of flight of the bomb and the localization of its ultimate destination might prove of great value, but they are—so far as I know—quite unknown. The problem is much more difficult than that of the observation of the sound of shells, for two reasons. Shells are always coming from the direction of the enemy positions which are known, whereas the location and direction of flight of the bomber is rarely known on account of its height in daytime or invisibility in the dark. Secondly, the observer is rarely in an open place but is among buildings the walls of which obscure and distort sound or may, by echoing, change its direction. So all that the ordinary person ever learns is the association of the sound of a falling bomb with one that will alight somewhere near.

If there has been an extinction of all fears conditioned with signals apart from those of light A.A. fire and the sound of a falling bomb, the appearance of fear will be rare. (If the subject learns to take protective action on hearing these signals, there will be little or no fear, as we shall see shortly.) Differentiation of signals is thus a valuable adaptation because it reduces the occasions on which fear

<sup>1</sup> I am not discussing 'crash warnings' because they are given, almost exclusively, to personnel who are under orders and not left to exercise discretion as are the great bulk of the public on whose behaviour rests the morale of the community.

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will arise. Further, if the final signal with which the feeling of danger is associated is one that gives one time to seek shelter, that knowledge gives comfort.

More than a decade ago I was asked by an armaments expert in the Royal Air Force whether, from a psychological point of view, it would be advisable to attach to bombs a mechanism which would produce a shrieking or howling noise. My reply was that, although this might initially enhance terror, it would almost certainly defeat its end before long. The reason given was that the bomb would be noisier than without the attachment and thus audible throughout a longer period of its flight. This would give the intended victims time to get into shelters and thus give them a feeling of security. It is waiting for something that will give no warning of its approach that is most trying. The Germans, with their facility for exploiting the obvious in matters psychological, tried shrieking bombs in this war. One anecdote will illustrate their usefulness—to us. At the time in 1940 when attacks on British aerodromes were beginning, the enemy spent a large part of one night in bombing a certain aerodrome from a great height with smallish, shrieking bombs. After each salvo sappers went on the landing ground and filled in the holes. When they heard more bombs coming they ran to their shelters. By dawn all the holes had been filled in, the aerodrome was serviceable and there had been no casualties.<sup>1</sup>

This discussion of adaptation to signals would be incomplete without mention of an important consideration. In military organizations, or in others where a similar authority over personnel exists, orders can be given as to action in response to signals that become commands. But this is not possible for the rank and file of the civilian population except in a regimentalized dictatorship. People who will

<sup>1</sup> This story came to my ears only after it had been in circulation for some time and I cannot vouch for its accuracy. But even if it had no basis in fact it would still serve as an illustration of a given signal changing from something which evoked fear to something which gave a feeling of security. Those who told the tale believed that the louder noise of a shrieking bomb could be used to ensure safety and that is what matters.

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accept orders from the Government in regard to service for the country will insist on using their own judgment in regard to measures designed to save their lives. Practically, regulations become merely recommendations, not orders, and there is no popular support for the use of force in securing obedience. It follows that arbitrary signals for taking cover, such as sirens, are obeyed only if experience confirms the association of danger with the signal. As we have seen, bombing has to be on an extremely heavy scale if it is not going to produce a larger remote-miss than a near-miss number of survivors. In Barcelona people would not leave food queues when air-raid warnings sounded, and deep shelters were not filled. On at least one occasion a large queue received a direct hit. Early in 1941 I was motoring through the town of X in an army vehicle so noisy that I did not hear a siren that blew. The population were going about their business normally. Then a bomb fell about a quarter of a mile away. Within a few seconds people were leaving the shops to look into the sky. I related this incident to a Regional officer who said: 'I know, I know; the damn fools; the trouble with X is that it has never had a real Blitz, but they'll learn one of these days.' This kind of foolhardiness seems a needless waste of lives valuable to the community and, indeed, it is. Yet when one thinks out the implications of the coercion that would prevent it, the price paid for personal liberty may not seem too high. But such reflections would probably bring small comfort to the Home Security officials who have, paradoxically, to rely on the Luftwaffe for enforcement of their regulations.

So much for the modification of behaviour in the face of danger that rests on the emotional adaptation to signals. But there is one other, and a not unimportant, aspect of passive adaptation to be considered. When fear that has been conditioned with some danger is extinguished, it does not leave a vacuum. There remains a less dramatic feeling, one of courage, confidence, or merely security. If we were in our emotions rational and logical, we should ascribe our



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escape to luck, Fate, or Providence in accordance with our philosophy. But we don't. We condition such feelings with the situation we were in when we escaped, or with some outstanding feature of it which may be the action we took. If one goes to a shelter, the shelter becomes an effective protection, while the workman who stays by his lathe is confirmed in his tendency to take chances. The survivor who was in the open may rationalize his safety by saying that walls could not fall on him; the one who stayed indoors was protected from falling shrapnel or bomb fragments. They were both remote-misses. Contrariwise, the near-miss victim will condition his fear with coincident situation. From the neurosis point of view evacuation may, through this conditioning, become the starting-point for an anxiety state. Particularly when it involves some abandonment of duty or responsibilities, evacuation is a running away. If safety is conditioned with running away, then that is the one emotionally valid method of escape from a danger that is difficult to evade anywhere in this small island. There are more neurotics among evacuees than the stay-at-homes. Of course this is natural because the neurotic is apt to begin with more than the average timorousness. But evacuation has increased neurosis while sticking at the job has tended to reduce it; moreover, many of the evacuees whose morale is none too good have been evacuated under orders.

Finally, the conditioning of emotion can explain one regularly recurring phenomenon, namely the spread of superstition during a war. The human mind seems reluctant to accept chance as a cause of any event. In a phenomenon which he does not directly control himself the savage sees as explanation the work of a spirit, friendly, malevolent or merely capricious. This theory leads naturally to magic through which material objects can be dowered with properties that have no relevance to the intrinsic physical nature of the object. These objects then become vehicles for the transmission of weal or woe. Western civilization—at least since the seventeenth century—tends to a similarly exclusive causality but the exact opposite. Material

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forces are the only ones admitted by this philosophy. Conscious intelligence may accept this dogma but unconsciously, emotionally, we dispute its universality. In times of peace we may toy with the notion of a broken mirror, spilt salt, or a black cat being the antecedent cause of some accident. We half believe it although we scoff at superstition. But the accidents of civilian life are, relatively, trivial. In war, however, when survival depends more on good luck than good management, the manipulation of chance through magic receives an emotional support strong enough to overcome the critique of peace. There is usually development of the superstition.

N, who is going into action, is given some talisman—rabbit's foot, lucky penny, saint's image, or what not—by his friend M. N may demur but M asks him as a favour to try it anyway. Perhaps as a mere act of politeness N agrees to carry it on his person, perhaps he says to himself: 'It's no trouble to me and there might be something in it.' At any rate he takes it. The next day a man beside him is killed but he escapes without a scratch. The conditioning of security with the talisman has begun. There are more such experiences and the conditioning is reinforced until it becomes fixed as a belief in this particular magic—which may exist in spite of an avowed disbelief in magic. N compares notes with his companions and finds that they too have their charms or potent rituals. Social sanction for this kind of superstition now fortifies the practices. If this development is to be understood it is only necessary to remember that dead men tell no tales. In all but rare actions of the forlorn hope type the majority of combatants survive. If every one of these has had a talisman, the efficacy of the magic is proved to be 100 per cent, because no attention is paid to the corpse who fails to complain that the magic did not work.

Anything which gives comfort to one beset with peril is, perhaps, worth while, silly though it may be. But the talisman sometimes does harm. If morale is conditioned with its possession, its absence is necessarily unnerving. The pilot who goes on patrol and discovers

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only when in the air that he has left his lucky bit at home is unnerved. His confidence is lost and, with that, his skill in combat. So he is shot down. When his companions go over his effects they find the talisman—further proof to them of how essential magical protection is. In spite of our easy assumption of intellectual superiority to the savage, the majority of us stick to the logic of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. The superiority of our culture rests on our having a group—not a large one—of specialists who are trained in controlled experiment and have some notion of statistical method. Yet even these savants will shew a naïve empiricism in matters lying outside their field. How many non-medical scientists are there who do not believe that the last kind of medicine taken cured the illness that was going anyway to run its course to spontaneous recovery?

## CHAPTER 2

### *ACTIVE ADAPTATION TO DANGERS*

WHILE reading the first chapter the reader has probably made a serious criticism. He has said: the author is like all these academic people; he seems to think that all people are alike, just puppets; doesn't he realize that some are cowards and some brave, that a coward may act bravely in company with the courageous, that we don't take danger passively but do something about it? These are valid criticisms and require an answer. The reply is that I recognize the artificiality of what I am doing perhaps even better than does the critic, but that artificiality is the inevitable result of any analysis of any biological phenomenon. All the factors producing it cannot be considered at the same time, it is too confusing. The best one can do is to take one factor after another, endeavouring to discover how it would work if in isolation; if different factors can be seen to produce complementary results, well and good. If, however, two factors seem on analysis to be working against each other, then the problem arises of discovering, if possible, what the resultant of their conflicting activities will be. In this analysis of fear I have begun by indulging in two gross artificialities. The first is that man can be considered as if he were a solitary individual, whereas actually he is constantly being influenced by those about him at the moment, by what he has had impressed on him by them in the past and by what he expects of them in the future. The second artificiality is the assumption that man in the presence of danger may be a purely passive agent, whereas actually danger is a powerful stimulant to action and what he does is likely to affect the appearance or absence of fear. The neglect of this important fact is now to be remedied by another artificiality, the assumption that man is an actor and not an observer. We shall see that results of action do not conflict with conclusions drawn as to the

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effects of passive experience. On the other hand, when we come to discuss the social factor we shall learn that there is conflict between social and individual influences.

It has been stated that we all know fear in the sense of recognizing it when experienced. But that does not mean that we therefore scrutinize the experience so as to discover what the stages are in its development, the conditions under which it appears, or, equally important, what is present or what happens when, in a situation of danger, we feel no fear nor exhibit its symptoms to others. We tend naïvely to think that we are frightened when danger threatens but then, in practice, call situations dangerous only when we have been frightened. A simple example will illustrate how illogical this is.

You are crossing a street and hear the horn of a motor car. You look up, see the car bearing down on you, quicken your pace and reach the footpath in safety. There was no fear, there may not even have been a break in your talk with a companion. Yet you escaped being mangled or killed. If the imminent possibility of such a fate does not constitute danger, what does? Let us consider in contrast another and, fortunately, rarer occurrence. You are again crossing the roadway, the horn blows, again you look up and quicken your pace. But this time you step on a patch of grease and come down sprawling right in front of the car; with a desperate scramble or roll you reach safety or the driver with adroitness manages to swerve past you. You pick yourself up relieved at finding yourself only dirty. Soon you find yourself thinking about the escape and this thought is accompanied by fear. For some days you may be timorous in traffic, but that soon wears off when you return to your normal implicit denial of the danger lurking on roadways. What are the differences between these two kinds of experience? One, you will say, was a narrow escape while the other was not. But what does 'narrowness' mean? It cannot be just a physical distance, because the terrifying car may not have passed so close to you as did the one which produced no emotional shock. The difference lies, rather, in

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the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the action taken. In the first case there was, quite unreflectively, a movement of avoidance and no thought of its failure ever appeared. In the second case the same unreflective movement was attempted but miscarried, in the resultant emergency unpractised movements were made and so soon as there was any reflection on the escape the symptoms of fear appeared.

Assuming that this is a typical example of what occurs when a danger leads to fear, we can see that there are two quite separable factors involved in the making of a danger into a 'narrow escape'. The first is that the immediate, unreflective action taken in the emergency is effective or ineffective. In the former case the emergency ends and the incident is closed without any emotional reaction and, probably, leaves no memory behind it except perhaps for a few minutes. In the latter case the ineffective action lingers in the memory and there are thoughts about what would have happened if the final scramble had been unsuccessful. So, for the production of fear there must be not merely danger but ineffective action to meet it followed by a rehearsal of the events in memory, an inaccurate memory for it includes an element not really experienced, namely the imagination of an injury that never occurred. The same formula applies to fears that are conjured up in fancy. There is always a thought of ineffective action. The thought of danger countered with effective action is the formula for the pleasant fantasy of adventure. Thus it would seem that fear results from thoughts of ineffective measures to meet danger.

But is the example I have chosen really typical? A little reflection will probably convince anyone that what is terrifying about any danger is inability to cope with it. Almost everyone of us deals habitually with animals, machines or materials that are potentially dangerous and that do terrify those unfamiliar with their use. We too were frightened, or at least timorous, before we acquired our technique. The most universally operating cause of fear is the convulsion of nature against which man can do nothing. But what about

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the necessity for rumination before anxiety appears? Most people are sceptical about that: it is contrary to common experience they submit. Is it? Ask a big game hunter if he was frightened when the buffalo or rhinoceros was charging at him and he will tell you that he was not. Rather surprisingly, his fear came later. Even people mauled by lions report a kind of numbed calm. A mountaineer friend of mine told me how he once climbed a long chimney without any emotion. But when he reached a ledge where he could rest in security he became so frightened that he was sick. There is often an apparent exception when a danger is protracted; but it is then found that, when fear appeared, attention was withdrawn from efforts to combat it and turned to thoughts of failure. The reason why most people think they were frightened at the moment of escape from some danger is probably that they confuse the false memory that includes failure with the real sequence of events both subjective and objective. Before the reader excludes this explanation or denies the truth of the generalization, let him postpone decision until he has some opportunity to introspect once more on his feelings during some narrow escape. One confusing phenomenon is a sudden beat of the heart or similar bodily disturbance on being startled. But 'startle' is a different phenomenon from fear, it is a sudden reflex response to an unexpected stimulus. It is true that it often merges into a fear reaction, but it may also merge into a state of pleasurable excitement.

For these reasons I am going to assume the truth of the statement that fear appears when there is thought of danger that cannot be adequately evaded or countered. This makes action, and action that commands all the subject's attention, the preventive of fear. So, naturally, we must turn to examine the nature of possible actions. Our task is simplified by knowing that the only relevant activities are those that will appear spontaneously in an emergency, that is to say, behaviour that is instinctive or deeply ingrained by habit. Dramatic fear, the paralysing terror we are interested in, is something

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that occurs only in the immediate presence of danger, real or imaginary, when something has to be done and done at once. The use of the term fear as a motive for long-term planning is really metaphorical.

Rivers, in his interesting book *Instinct and the Unconscious*, has given five possible types of behaviour that may appear unreflectively and involuntarily in the presence of danger, and his list is, I think, complete. They are, flight, aggression, 'manipulative activity', immobility and collapse.

*Flight* is an avoiding reaction which may extend from a simple ducking or dodging movement in avoiding a blow to impetuous and prolonged running. The nature of flight behaviour is too obvious to need any description of its various forms and intensities. We need only note that, when it is effective or believed to be, it is not accompanied by fear. The guerrilla fighter who strikes and runs knowing that his speed is superior to that of his enemy is not frightened, he probably enjoys his flight as proof of his prowess. What does terrify is running while one feels that one is not escaping. This is what is characteristic of nightmares—the very paradigm of terror.

*Aggression* is an attempt to remove danger by destruction of the noxious agent or agency. It may be no more than slapping at an insect or the most energetic charge at, and pursuit of, an enemy. The range and nature of such activities are, again, matters too obvious to require any description. Successful aggression precludes fear, although prevention of adequate expression for it will lead to anger. ('Pent-up' is the time-honoured adjective to go with rage.)

*Manipulative activity* is more complicated. It is not instinctive in the sense of being inborn but is the product of prolonged training, particularly in the use of weapons. There is a combination of aggression and flight actions with a change from one to the other as the exigencies of the situation develop. But the details of this kaleidoscopic activity are not thought out; they occur with too great speed for that and, indeed, the combatant may have so little aware-



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ness of what he does that his memory of the conflict is hazy. One thinks of the boxer who is dazed by a blow early in a bout but fights on to victory having throughout very little awareness of what he is doing. These skills that can be exhibited in automatic, unreflective behaviour are the product of habits built up during many hours of practice, habits for countering various types of blow and for attacking when various types of opening are presented. There may be a general policy that is directed by consciousness, a policy of going slow this round or of being aggressive, but consciousness is not directing how each emergency is to be met as it arises. There seems to be no fear with manipulative activity when it is undertaken whole-heartedly, indeed there is little emotion of any kind beyond a feeling of tenseness that is either slightly unpleasant or slightly exhilarating. It is the combatant who cannot trust his skill, who cannot 'lose himself' in the fight, who substitutes cumbrous conscious thinking for rapid automatic action, who gets frightened.

Manipulative activity explains professional immunity to danger. The doctor or nurse knows something about the habits of bacteria and how they travel. With any reasonable luck there will be no infection provided one follows the proper technique. The doctor knows this technique and employs it by habit. The layman, ignorant or not practised in the methods of protection, does not know what to do in the presence of contagious disease and so is frightened. The same principle applies to all dangerous occupations, even including bomb disposal. The layman does not know what is safe to touch in a bomb and so does not dare even to approach it. The trained sapper knows how to manipulate a bomb and not detonate it. Of course the bomb may be of a new type. What then comes to the aid of his courage is fatalism born of his having been a remote-miss many times; bomb disposal squads are composed entirely of men who are remote-misses—there can be no near-misses among them. What is courage? That is a question as difficult to answer as what is fear? The layman thinks the bomb disposer intrepid because he faces the

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possibility of instantaneous destruction calmly. This hero, however, says there is no reason to worry because, if he made a mistake, he would never know it. (This is not made up *ad hoc*; it is an explanation given by a modest possessor of the George Cross.) That the bomb-disposal expert should feel this way follows inevitably from the principles we have been discussing. The psychologist can explain away the courage of the experienced practitioner, but there was a time when he was not experienced. The apprentice is the man before whom the psychologist bares his head in humility.

*Collapse* need be described only to disregard it, for it is merely a rare and abnormal response to danger observable in both man and animals; it has no adaptive value and anxiety states can be accounted for without invoking it as a factor. When collapse occurs the man or animal sinks to the ground incapable of voluntary, or indeed any co-ordinated, muscular action. There are coarse tremors or jerkings of the limbs. Blood pressure probably falls and the condition may be so extreme as to lead to death from 'shock'.

So, finally, we come to *Immobility*. This is a form of protection employed frequently by animals, particularly the smaller rodents who, in the presence of danger, become motionless, 'freeze', or 'sham death'. To you who see the rabbit crouching by the path it seems a foolish creature in remaining so close to peril. When your dog walks past the rabbit, almost stepping on it, you think he is strangely inattentive to normal canine interests. You are wrong on both counts. The rabbit had made himself invisible to the dog because the latter, as we have seen, is colour blind, as are all the four-footed enemies of the rabbit. You detected the rabbit because its body made a grey patch of characteristic shape against a green background. The dog saw—or did not see—blobs of grey against a background made up of more blobs of grey. The dog sees only variations in the scale that runs from white to black through innumerable shades of grey, which is just what we see in the ordinary photograph. Every amateur photographer knows the picture of the animal that seemed to be

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posing conspicuously shews the animal only if one knows where to look for it. That is precisely the position of the predatory animal.<sup>1</sup> Like you he can see the rabbit when his attention is directed to it but not otherwise. On the other hand the dog is extremely sensitive to movement; a mere flick in any part of his visual field is enough to draw his eyes to that point. Thus immobility is a useful protective reaction—provided it is complete.

This, the reader may object, is perhaps interesting as a bit of natural history but what has it to do with man? We do not practise immobility in meeting danger. Is this an accurate statement? If it means that civilized man does not consciously employ immobility, it is certainly true. But we are now studying the recesses of the human mind, that part of it which he shares with the lower animals. Man might have an instinctive immobility tendency which is not usually exercised merely because in our present state of civilization the dangers we habitually encounter do not emanate from wild animals with no colour vision. They arise more from the direct or indirect activities of other human beings. There is evidence that instincts which are not cultivated by man may survive unconsciously. As to the likelihood of this happening in the case of immobility, it should be remembered that, in his total evolutionary history, man has been *homo sapiens* and civilized for a very short time indeed. We should therefore expect that a widespread and basic animal instinct would survive at least as a potential tendency ready to express itself, to exert its influence, when circumstances were favourable for its exhibition. This expectation is further justified by the fact that actual immobility is practised by some savages. The purpose of immobility is to escape notice and this is as valuable for the predatory creature that lies in wait for its prey as it is for the prey that shrinks from observation. The hunters of some mountain Malays can, according to an anthropologist friend of mine, remain motionless for hours apparently regardless of terrible heat or the stings of insects. For

<sup>1</sup> An exception is that many, if not all, birds have colour vision.

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these reasons, then, it seems not unreasonable to assume that immobility is one of the possible forms of involuntary behaviour in the face of danger.

If we make this assumption our first problem is to see how the immobility tendency would be likely to exhibit itself in man. Manipulative activity is first exhibited by monkeys and apes when they use sticks or stones as weapons, but its extensive development is essentially human. May not immobility have its peculiarly human form? The Scylla and Charybdis of psychology are the theories that man's mind includes only what is known to his introspection and the opposite view that all his mental operations can be regarded merely as elaborations of the animal mind. Steering a middle course we should expect human instincts to be expressed in forms that were characteristically human. Now animal behaviour is dominated by appetites, internal bodily events largely chemical, that furnish various drives and by instincts which are responses to what the creature encounters in his environment. Man has achieved his unique control over his environment by thought and the more civilized he is the truer is this statement. Crude appetitive and instinctive actions are, of course, common, but the vast bulk of man's behaviour is prompted by thought. He considers what he ought to do and then does it. It would therefore be not unnatural if the immobility tendency exhibited itself in man as an inhibition of thinking.

When would this be most likely to occur? Danger demands immediate action, action taken on the spur of the moment, that is, something instinctive, or expressing an ingrained habit, or a new type of behaviour thought out in the twinkling of an eye. The last is something to be expected only of a genius. So we are left with the 'ready to serve' responses. If, now, flight is obviously impracticable or banned by authority, if aggression is similarly unfeasible, and if there is no manipulative activity already trained, what is there, so far as innate or ingrained responses are concerned, except immobility?

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As to this there is, indeed, some direct evidence. Earthquakes, heavy shell-fire, bombing all produce in the near-miss groups occasional cases of stupor. This is a definitely pathological reaction merely, perhaps, because it is prolonged. For hours or days the patient, who has received no physical injury, lies motionless, mute, apparently quite apathetic and unresponsive even to such stimuli as pin-pricks. The numbed paralysis which momentarily robs a normal individual of feeling, thought or movement in the presence of catastrophe is very likely a brief stupor, that is to say, a direct exhibition of the immobility response. It endures, however, only for a period measurable in seconds. The subject then ceases to be an animal and becomes a man: he tries to think of some way of escape. If the first plan he can fabricate is not feasible, he is back where he started; again there is an automatic tendency to attempt flight or aggression that is obviously futile and again the immobility reaction tends to appear. This time, however, it does not take complete command stopping all mental or bodily activity, it appears rather as an inhibition of what is the newest and most vulnerable of human capacities, namely the ability to think. There is paralysis of thought, at least of effective thought. There is thus a deadlock; the urgency of the situation promotes impulses to escape that will not be denied, while the immobility tendency prevents the thinking out of means of translating these impulses into feasible plans.

This is what makes fear; perhaps it is what fear is. It should be noted that this analysis covers a wide variety of situations in connection with which we use the word fear or one of its synonyms. When there is a deadlock between a striving to do something and an inhibition which keeps it in check there is a queer feeling that we classify as belonging to the fear family of emotions. When the inhibition is voluntarily imposed, as when waiting to compete in a game or an examination, we get 'the needle'. At the other end of the scale is an inhibition that is completely unconscious and the terror appears in which paralysis is a prominent and invariable component. This is

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exemplified in the stock descriptive phrases such as 'rooted to the ground', 'frozen with terror', 'paralysed with fear', 'struck dumb', or, when the inhibition affects thinking alone, 'I could only think of running'. There is obsessive concern with the fate inevitable if nothing is done, a compulsion to do something, and an inability to think of any adaptive action—a vicious circle.

In passing it would be well to note one stage in the development of fear as thus analysed. When the initial numbing shock of a great danger lapses, there ensues a tendency to think of some solution of the problem presented. There is no more effective incitement to quick thinking than this and, if the immobility reaction does not step in, the subject may fabricate a plan more quickly than he ever could without such a compelling reason for thinking hard and thinking fast. The same emergency may bring out the full capacity of one man while it paralyses the abilities of another. We shall return to this topic shortly.

According to this analysis it would appear that everything turns on the subject doing something in the presence of danger to which he gives his attention. It is the quandary as to what to do that generates fear. There are several corollaries of military significance that follow this formulation.

The first is that we have here an explanation for the fact that throughout military history, with extremely few exceptions, a novel weapon or a novel method of using known weapons produces panic in the enemy. Army training and prior experience have provided troops with methods of dealing with the known and expected. This may be the way to defend and counter-attack or it may be merely habituation that has generated a fatalistic attitude—'sit tight and take your chances, they are really not so bad'. The novel form of attack is something to meet which there is no defence ready as an automatic response and, failing that, attention is turned exclusively to the danger which seems to threaten complete and universal destruction. The example of the dive bomber is fresh in our minds.

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We have seen how, initially, it produced widespread panic, but we have also learned that it is really nothing like the devastating weapon it was first regarded as being and that troops can be adapted to it. In this connection one guesses as to the morale of the German army may be hazarded. Their infantry has received a highly specialized training with modern weapons and so far they have been able to dictate choice of weapons. Because they have met only what they have been prepared for, their courage has been high. But, if we either produce a new form of attack or can attack them at close quarters with the old-fashioned bayonet, they will be the more at a loss because of the specialization of their training.

The second corollary has to do with the rationale of military training. This should be considered under the two heads, drill in general and drill in special manoeuvres.

To the sceptical civilian (and often to the recruit) the hours spent in the barrack square in forming fours (or threes) and marching in formations completely inappropriate for modern warfare are so much waste time if, indeed, they are not stupefying. Similarly the punctilious etiquette of saluting and so on is silly. Military services are notoriously hag-ridden by traditions; are these customs maintained because they are traditional or have they any psychologically justifiable basis? My answer would be that they are not merely useful, they are essential. No one has as yet devised any other system which will so quickly inculcate the habit of automatic obedience. (The feeling of corporate unity thus engendered is also valuable, but that is a topic belonging to our next section.) Automaticity is here the key word. When suddenly confronted with peril the automaton will do what he is told and not try to think for himself and so long as he so continues he will have no fear because there is for him no quandary. Decision, and therefore the maintenance of morale, is thus left to the officers and N.C.O.'s, who are selected for that capacity.

If there is any time-worn principle that psychology has repeatedly to underline it is—as we shall see many times before we are finished

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with these discussions—that there is no virtue that does not carry with it the seeds of vice, of vice that appears so soon as the virtue is cultivated exclusively. Automatic obedience is essential, yet if it be inculcated exclusively there is produced an army of robots completely useless in the versatile manœuvres of modern warfare. This brings us to specialized training.

Specialized training is, in the jargon we are now using, learning manipulative activity. Its rôle in the prevention of fear may, perhaps, be most easily explained by consideration of one simple, but typical, example. It is bayonet fighting. A bayonet wound is a nasty thing and there are few ordeals more horrid to contemplate than having a bayonet stuck into one's belly and twisted around. A soldier afraid of this is afraid to get to close quarters; if afraid of this he will either avoid it by running away from the enemy when the latter draws near, or he will not charge with enthusiasm. How can this fear be conquered? Certainly not in actual combat, for it is said that practically every bayonet fight is settled before it begins: the soldier who has the greater self-confidence shews it in his bearing; his opponent becomes frightened, is paralysed and puts up no resistance. This formidable bearing can be learnt, as was proved during the last war when it was found that the most important element in training was the practice of aggression. The soldier who automatically begins a bayonet fight with an impetuous rush terrifies his more wary opponent unless the latter is a practised competitor with skill like that of a veteran boxer. It is not possible to train all soldiers to this pitch of efficiency. The ones who do achieve this skill are, of course, not frightened when they take up a pose of defence. Their attention is focused on the actual manipulations and not straying to thoughts of failure. This immunity to fear is not something that can be inculcated by any kind of purely verbal instructions or even by demonstration. The soldier must have so practised the movements that they have become habitual. Then, in the moment of trial, the sight of the enemy's bayonet calls forth the various manipulations that have been



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conditioned therewith; the soldier fights automatically and without the reflection which engenders fear.

This is a simple example of the rôle of training in the prevention of fear in battle. Mechanized warfare involves the use of many specialized techniques and they have to be learned not merely in theory but practised until, with all their variations, they can be reproduced automatically. This is why it takes a long time to make a real soldier, longer now than ever before, probably. No matter how high his courage, the civilian cannot be efficient in the face of a novel catastrophic danger. He may not run away, he may exhibit externally no sign of panic, but he will really be paralysed if he cannot automatically perform the correct manipulations.

Here again one is tempted to make a psychological comment on German morale. Before the present war it was based essentially on aggression and mass action (to be discussed soon). But we are now facing quite a different army, one whose training is essentially in manipulative activity. This will involve two real differences. He who is by habit aggressive does not know how to retreat, is confused and lost when he has to withdraw. That was—speaking very broadly—the German army of the last war. But manipulative activity is as much a matter of defence and withdrawal as it is of offence and advance. The present-day German soldier has, in his manoeuvres, been retreating as much as he has been attacking. There is nothing novel about this and no ‘withdrawal according to plan’ will upset his morale. (What it may do to the morale of the Reich as a whole is another matter.) The second difference follows from the vulnerability inherent in specialized training. A boxer without his gloves can always use his fists but a swordsman without his sword is lost. German morale has been bound up with equipment. If that runs short, German morale should be expected to crumble perhaps with a speed that surprises the opposing forces. The situation is simply exemplified in connection with one weapon—the hand grenade. The Germans decided, if my information is correct, that

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the bomb was a more effective weapon at close quarters than the bayonet. Even school boys, we are told, have been practised in throwing dummy bombs. No amount of practice will compensate for poor co-ordination and it is unlikely that they have thus produced a greater number of soldiers who can lob a bomb exactly where it is wanted than are to be found among the cricket-playing lads of Britain. But the German soldier will have, in his psychological equipment, automatic behaviour to be exhibited at close quarters—provided his supply of bombs holds out. So soon as that supply is exhausted, it is certain to be—‘Kamerad!’

Under the heading of individual adaptation to danger there remains one more topic to discuss, namely the rôle of imagination in anticipation of the hazards lying ahead. Novelty in a situation calling for instantaneous action leaves one at a loss as to what should be done. A theoretically complete description of the sights and sounds to be encountered, understood by a subject and translated by him into adequate visual and auditory images, would rob the actuality of novelty. Such complete anticipation is, of course, impossible, but that does not mean that description of dangers and horrors may not give the auditor a considerable degree of immunity.

This is a place where psychology and ‘common sense’ part company. Common sense says this will frighten the victims in advance and thus make them enter the arena already un-nerved. This view is based on the intuitive recognition that imagination is the precursor of fear but a failure to realize that imagination need not be solely of the direful but may also include behaviour that copes with the danger. Imagination can be adaptive. It is true that realistic descriptions may produce anxiety, but is it not probable that those thus incapacitated are the very ones most liable to crack in the real trial, the ones who ought to be excluded from service in the front line? Common sense has not reckoned with the indisputable fact that children taught fire drill will shew no panic when a real fire breaks out. Are children not imaginative? There is no camouflage of the object of the drill.

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Or there is the case of analogous drill on board ship. Passengers who embark in a liner do not learn then for the first time of the dangers of fire, collision, or, in time of war, torpedoes. It is a rare passenger who is frightened, or made more frightened, when he is required on hearing so many blasts on the ship's whistle to get his life-jacket and then proceed to a particular station on one of the decks. There an officer inspects his jacket and, very likely, points out that if it be left loose it will hit his chin when he jumps into the water and knock him out. A terrifying prospect, this business of jumping into the sea! Surely, common sense would urge, imagination of such an ordeal ought to be discouraged. Yet it is notorious that such preparation does prevent panic, if the emergency arises.

But how can adaptive imagination be fostered? This might be done by combining description of perils with that of the means that may be taken to circumvent them. The most effective form of this would, presumably, be a sound film accompanied by instructional comments. The same event should be depicted with and without protective action. For instance modern cinema technique is capable of shewing the same dive-bombing attack with different sequels. There could be first a successful attack on a machine-gun crew. Next could come the crew throwing themselves flat and escaping injury. Third would be of the gunner waiting till the bomber was within range and then shooting it down. If the successful attack was shewn with many men in the picture, most of whom survived, and the comment 'He never knew what hit him' was made in reference to an isolated victim, the audience would have impressed on them that the chances of survival were large. This should be supplemented by statistics as to the actual rate of casualties in dive-bombing attacks, which must be available at least from the preliminary phase of the Battle of Britain when aerodromes were attacked heavily.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A serious defect of our publicity is that absolute numbers of casualties during some period—from air-raids, for instance—are given without any comment that would enable the ordinary man to evaluate them. For example, it should be stated that the casualties were so many killed during the last month. The population

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Finally, it should be explained how anticipation of ordeals may lead to proficiency in them. Thought of failure is what prompts fear, but if a man is constantly preoccupied with the causes of failure and accompanies this with plans for meeting all the emergencies he can think of, then he reduces the number of accidents for which he is unprepared. Thus we arrive at the paradox that what a man is most afraid of (in one sense of that term) may be the one that finds him coolest in actuality. This is well illustrated from the earlier years of aviation when engines were not so reliable as they now are. Forced landings were a commonplace. The good pilot was never a moment in the air without thinking of a forced landing: he kept looking for the best place to land at that moment; he moved, so to speak, from one forced landing field to another in making a cross-country flight; if he had to cross a plantation or other inhospitable bit of land, he would climb so as to have a longer gliding range. When the engine did cut out, there was not an instant's hesitation, down went the nose to get the proper gliding angle and course was set to approach the chosen field up wind and an easy, untroubled landing was made. Those who trusted their engines and relied on their quick wits to meet such emergencies were nearly all killed in those days.

This leads us to consideration of a problem important in all services when men have to be chosen for special tasks. We have, let us say, two men A and B. So far as all ordinary tests can shew they are identical in intellectual and physical capacities, yet A cannot learn to fly an aeroplane while B does so with facility; at the same time B cannot instruct a squad of men while A does so admirably. The problem is labelled, not solved, by saying it is a matter of temperamental fitness. A good games player needs stern competition to bring out his best possible performance, whereas a rabbit can never do exposed in the bombed areas was so many. Therefore the rate was so many per thousand of potential victims. (According to my memory it has rarely been so high as one in a thousand.) This rate should be compared with other causes of death. It would surprise most people to learn what a small series of years of motor accidents supply the same number of deaths as that produced since the present war began by bombs.

## TEMPERAMENTAL FITNESS

himself justice under just those conditions. The easiest way to spot temperamental fitness or unfitness is to observe behaviour in the face of emergencies. One man seems then to think more quickly, the other to become stupid and confused. This gives us a clue, for we have seen that successful behaviour on the spur of the moment depends on earlier preoccupation with problems belonging to the field in question. But why should A think of instruction while B dreams of flying? The answer takes us a long way back in their histories.

We shall take as an example a problem in temperamental unfitness that frequently concerns an infantry commanding officer. A soldier who is intelligent, who does well in all other aspects of training, seems incapable of learning to handle a bayonet; he is clumsy, he makes the same mistakes over and over again, the sergeant says he doesn't try, while the poor wretch protests that he is trying. Many officers have asked me for advice about such cases or analogous ones. It probably began early in childhood. The small boy got into a fight and was beaten. His opponent gained kudos while he was disgraced. Very probably he wept and was called a cry-baby. Then he is bullied. If he tries to fight back he has against him not only another boy but also his memory of previous defeat, so thus handicapped he is beaten before he begins. The more repetitions there are of these experiences, the more he is conditioned for failure. The mere thought of physical conflict is distasteful and he avoids it. If it be obtruded on him it is the signal for fear and its paralysis: he just doesn't know what he should do if set upon. He may face a visit to the dentist with equanimity but the thought of being struck is disabling. He may have good co-ordination and excel in golf or lawn tennis but avoids the rougher games. Very possibly he has developed a horror of violence, particularly of bloodshed. The days when fisticuffs mattered are long past, he has made his place in the community and is not lacking in self-confidence, he is not neurotic, he is not a pacifist. Then comes the war and he is called up—perhaps he volunteers. He learns his

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drill easily, he learns to shoot quickly, he is an apt soldier—until it comes to the bayonet. The more realistic the practice is, the more he is upset; when the sergeant talks about sticking the bayonet into the enemy's guts, he is sick. The thought of being attacked by a bayonet himself paralyses him. The ancient conditioned fear reaction has reasserted itself, the immobility response stops him from even understanding the instructions properly.

What does one do with such a case? No single answer is adequate, it must be conditional except in one particular. Objurgation, threats, coercion, punishment will only increase the trouble. That kind of treatment is useful—indeed essential—when the defaulter is lazy, indifferent or consciously unco-operative. But when the trouble is beyond the voluntary control of the delinquent and rests on anxiety, such procedures merely increase the anxiety. The first thing to be done is to interview the culprit in as informal a way as is compatible with discipline. He should be asked about the occurrence of similar difficulties in the past. It is surprising how often symptoms of this order originate in unpleasantnesses of relatively recent date, and the conditioning of the deleterious emotion can be quickly extinguished during a sympathetic talk which results in the association being made fully conscious, thus enabling the patient to deal with it in a human, rather than an animal, way. This should be followed by re-education, by what in an animal would be called differentiation. He must learn that a bayonet will not punch him on the nose, which is what he is unconsciously afraid of. He should practise jabbing his bayonet at an archery target or something similar which does not resemble a human body. A sympathetic instructor should teach him the parries and thrusts with wooden implements that manifestly could not make penetrating wounds. Above all the instructor should allow himself to be defeated in such mock combats, putting up just enough resistance to prevent the unreality from becoming ridiculous. If the pupil can learn to make the various movements automatically and without fear, he can be brought gradually to use the real weapon confidently.

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Now it is quite obvious that the interview (or interviews) and the re-education will take a good deal of time, time that will have to be taken from something else. This is a nice problem for the commanding officer to decide and it may be well to mention the factors to be weighed.

First, there is the importance of the individual himself. One of the cruelties of war is that individual comfort or happiness must always be a consideration secondary to that of the value, actual or potential, of the individual to the group. If the man is a weak, feckless creature, decision is easy: he should be either discharged from the army or transferred to some non-combatant branch of the service. If, however, he seems to be in other respects a good soldier, and particularly if he wants to conquer his trouble, the time taken to rehabilitate him may be worth a good deal more than the value of one unit of cannon fodder. In the first place the process is highly instructive for both officers and the N.C.O.'s who carry out the re-education. The situation is much like that in the teaching of games. An indifferent professional can train anyone who is a born games player into being a tiger but it takes intelligence and patience to make a rabbit into a cat. There are many more rabbits than tigers among recruits and the success of a training regiment is to be measured by the number turned out as competent soldiers and not by the number of champions. An N.C.O. who is proud of his ability to deal with difficult cases is worth ten whose pride is in a stentorian voice or a vocabulary of vituperation. Secondly, the reclaimed soldier is worth more to his unit than one whose status was never in question. Instead of being a focus of discontent he becomes one of respect and affection for those in command above him. Of course it may be that these considerations do not justify the time required. Then a decision has to be reached as to whether the technique that seems beyond the ability of the soldier to acquire is really essential to his future duties or not. If it be unessential, the defaulter should be excused this training although given some other that is more rigorous so that he makes

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nothing out of his weakness. If it be essential, he must be transferred to some other branch of the service where the disability will not matter.

I am sometimes asked whether it would not be a good thing to have psychiatrists or clinical psychologists in charge of the rehabilitation of these misfits. Practically, the question can be dismissed because there are not enough to go round. But should the Services agitate for a supply of specialists that would eventually form part of the normal establishments? This would be desirable on many counts but, so far as this specific problem is concerned, I should deprecate it. It is true that his judgment would be superior to that of the commanding officer as to the general capacity or worthlessness of the individual, simply because the psychiatrist has a better knowledge of tell-tale signs of severe neurosis or actual mental disease. But in all else a psychologist should be employed only *faute de mieux* and then kept as much in the background as possible. It is bad enough to be an odd man; it is worse to be a marked man, one who needs a psychological nanny, or, on the other hand, to gain indulgence (as it may seem) in consequence of a disability. It is better that officers should be given instruction in general terms as to how difficult cases should be treated, but that treatment, so long as it goes on within the unit, should be administered by those who will eventually lead the troops to action. There will be no psychologist to hold the soldier's hand when he goes into battle and, if the officer has insufficient intelligence and insight to practise such simple psychotherapy as is here suggested, he is a poor officer anyway. It is interesting to note that the present German army has (in theory at least) dropped the old Prussian idea of officers as Olympians and soldiers as helots and now selects officers for the 'ability to command' coupled with the ability to deal with personal problems on a friendly basis, and the latter is prescribed as an essential part of an officer's duties. Psychologists—a numerous and highly organized part of the army—function in selection of recruits and cadets and in advice behind the scene.



## PANIC THINKING

One other corollary of this theory of temperamental fitness should be mentioned. We can all remember examples of actions taken by officials, particularly during the first few months of the war, that seemed to us stupid. We loyally assumed that they must have been based on information denied us or that they were part of some general campaign the nature of which would eventually be clear. But time manifested that we had been too charitable: the actions were stupid, not merely in demonstrating an intelligence lower than what ought to operate in these higher circles, but stupid in comparison with the intelligence of the average artisan. So we have been tempted to say, 'Are our officials and rulers feeble-minded?' or 'I'm no genius but I certainly shouldn't make a mistake like that!' Actually the blunders were not the product of stupidity but of panic—panic like that of the examinee who can work out the answer with ease when seated at home but is confused in the examination hall. What was the official (or minister) afraid of? Of bombs? Perhaps, but by no means certainly. The urgency of war and the power entrusted him under the emergency legislation gave him responsibilities such as he had never before had laid on him. So much rested on his decision—the very fate of the Empire, perhaps. Yet something must be done, and done now. His powers were unaccustomed and the situation novel, so routine procedure was inappropriate, something new must be done and done at once. Thus he was driven to 'get busy'. Now there is no way of impressing others with one's industry so certain of exciting attention as interference. The other fellow knows you are there if you put a spoke in his wheel. To the critic there was always an easy reply: 'You don't seem to realize that there's a war on.' The poor examinee is stymied more by what hangs on the result of the examination than he is by the difficulty of the questions: rationally directed imagination and critique are paralysed and he writes reams of disordered memories in the vain attempt to impress with bulk, or, perhaps, just to relieve the compulsion to do something. The official who is geared temperamentally to meet small responsibilities is panic-

## *PANIC THINKING*

stricken by a large one and produces a maximum of action with a minimum of thought. 'Business as usual' may serve as a cloak for sloth or a maintenance of selfish interest, but at least it means a maintenance of the basic life of the community, the production of the wealth of the country on which it has to live, peace or war.

Before we are too ruthless in our criticisms of the follies of those in authority let us remember how inconsistent we were during the first months of the war. We said it was going to be a long war and then set a pace of activity that could not possibly be maintained for more than a few months. Holidays were taboo and everyone was unhappy unless he was rushing round being busy. Except for the fatigue it caused this frantic activity did little harm among the rank and file. The stupidities we criticize were the product of similar tendencies among officials who were intelligent enough for their jobs but too small in character to meet added responsibility with equanimity. It takes a big man, be he general or executive, to remain inactive in an emergency until he has quietly thought out what should be done. If we complain that our governors should not have been small men, the reply is that we put them there. 'Safety first' was the watchword for many a long year after the last war; it demands 'safe' men in office and big men are not safe.

## Part II. MORALE



### CHAPTER 3

#### *BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL LIFE*

So far we have considered the thoughts, feelings and actions in the presence of danger of a creature who does not exist, that is a man who lives by and for himself alone. Man is a social animal and as such has a nature different from that of a solitary animal. This means not merely that he naturally consorts with and co-operates with his fellows; it means as well that his values are social as well as selfish and these values affect his behaviour whether he is in contact with his fellows or as isolated as a hermit. We can have a synthetic view of man's courage or cowardice only when we have considered the implications of his social character. Are man's social reactions merely the product of his habitual co-operation with his fellows, activities followed as a matter of expediency, or has he any deep-seated emotional and instinctive bond uniting him to others of his species? If the former we should not expect them to survive long in any conflict with the elemental passions aroused by the instinct of self-preservation. On the other hand, if social behaviour is based itself on something instinctive, the latter might be as powerful as self-interest or even more potent. The lay observer of human nature has long tended to be sceptical of motives that are logically and consciously elaborated: they are either camouflage or a flimsy structure that cannot endure a storm. Perhaps there are rare individuals who may be prepared to go to the stake rather than renounce a philological theory, but if such exist they are highly specialized products of an artificial civilization. Fundamental motives are those we share with the cave-man. This—not necessarily a cynical view—is held by

## BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HERD LIFE

the modern psychologist who looks for the ultimate source of action in instincts or 'drives' that are 'biological'. A biological urge is one that man shares with his cousins the animals, even though in the course of evolution it may have made clothes for itself, clothes that hide its naked brutishness. Are man's social tendencies thus 'biological'? If so, what are the psychological implications of the primitive tendency to run with the herd?

These problems have been fruitfully discussed by W. Trotter in his book *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. I shall follow his argument in laying a basis for our consideration of the influence of the social factor in morale.

It is difficult to imagine any deeper foundation, biologically, than that which Trotter builds for his 'Herd Instinct'. There are, he says, two great phases in the evolution of animals from the stage in which the unit was a single cell to that we see in man who has won such an enormously greater control over his environment than that enjoyed by the primitive unicellular creature. In the first stage, separate cells have united together to form the complicated bodies of the animals we see with our naked eyes. (Unicellular animals are, of course, microscopic in size.) As a result of this union the function of the individual cell is vastly altered and the aggregation to which it belongs has a competence that not one of its elemental components could ever have achieved by itself. In the second stage individual multicellular animals band together in groups—Trotter uses the collective term 'herd'—develop functional capacities as social animals and, as parts of another new unit, the herd, achieve a competence impossible for any solitary animal no matter how strong or how clever he might be. The analogy between the two evolutionary phases is compelling and we must see what the implications are of the two similar integrations.

If we analyse the life processes of even the smallest unicellular plant we find something that is to the unsophisticated a bit surprising. Every function that is found in our bodies is represented in

## DIFFERENTIATION OF FUNCTION AND

this minute creature. There is eating, digestion, assimilation, building up of chemical substances peculiar to the species and excretion of what is not needed; there is circulation and respiration; there is movement of parts of the body or all of it; there is conduction of excitement from one part of the body to another; and there is reproduction. There is even mental activity, for it can form conditioned reflexes. Yet it has no special organs for the performance of these functions—or at least there need not be (some unicellular animals have some degree of differentiation in structure of specialized parts). In an *Amoeba*, for instance, it seems that the same bit of its body may act now as a foot, again as a mouth or a stomach, and so on. It is a Jack of all trades. When it bunches itself together to ward off a particle in the surrounding water that is not good to eat, it exhibits a toughness that interferes with its contractility when it is acting like a muscle or with its competence as a digestive gland. So, although it can do all the jobs required of an animal's body, it can do none of them well. Improvement can be achieved only through division of labour. When several cells unite each can specialize, developing a structure better fitted for its particular task but, inevitably, its capacity for other functions deteriorates. Important principles are involved in this union.

In most general terms we can say that the integrated aggregation of cells has become a new unit biologically. But what does this imply? It means that the more perfect the integration, the more does the individual cell lose its individuality and the more is its function something useless to itself but valuable to the organism of which it is a minute component. It has become, so to speak, a mere slave condemned to perform one task ceaselessly. On the other hand this so-called slave may be equally well labelled a parasite because, except for its exercise of one function, it does nothing for itself. Consider the cells on the surface of the body which are toughened so as to protect the body. They do nothing towards feeding themselves, they do not hunt, they do not even bite, swallow or digest,

## *INTEGRATION OF NEW UNITS*

for their nourishment comes to them in pre-digested form. They do no 'work', for they have no muscles to contract. What a picture of slothful parasitism; yet where would the body be without its skin? 'And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee.' Why can't it? Simply because it has no voice. When it was a unicellular organism it had its own individuality, its life, its 'self' to defend or to pamper. These are now gone: it has ceased to exist as an independent entity. Its functions, once directed towards maintenance and aggrandizement of a single cell, are now working towards the maintenance and aggrandizement of a new unit, that of the total integration. There has been a complete re-orientation; any terms which refer to its activities as if they were individual have become meaningless. It does not strive for 'self-preservation' because it has no longer any 'self'. It has no instincts, no appetites, no drives, for all these directing agencies belong to the new unit. This is the meaning of integration. Through specialization of parts nature has, in the course of evolution, produced the marvels of bodily adaptations we can see among animals living in different environments, the scales of fishes, the fur of polar bears or the feathers of birds, the fins of fishes, the wings of birds or the hands of man.

These are, however, only tools, so to speak. How can they be used? The individual multicellular animal, like the unicellular one its predecessor, must strive for its life in an environment that is unfriendly or at least neutral. It must therefore not merely find its food and produce its young but also protect itself from the elements and all the creatures that would destroy it. So it, too, must be a Jack of all trades. However, by entering into league with others of its species it may achieve an efficiency in attack or defence that is quite beyond the capacity of any individual. At the same time there is a possibility for specialization of function in work that is useful for the group as a whole, or tasks can be essayed that would be beyond the scope of individual endeavour. An example of the latter is the engineering of the beaver. Insects and man have developed division

## *A SOCIETY A NEW UNIT*

of labour with specialization, other kinds of animals shewing only traces of it. Among insects there is bodily differentiation among the 'castes' and their highly organized societies seem to divide duties on the basis of these physiological specializations and on instinct, for individuals shew extremely little modifiability of behaviour. In insect colonies the orientation of the functions of the individual solely towards the weal of the group approximates the specialization of cells in the multicellular body, for bodily change may be so extreme as to make it incapable of independent existence. A female termite, for example, may grow till it is a thousand times the size of an ordinary worker, cease to move, be fed by the others and in return secrete from its skin a liquid that is licked by its brood and the workers. It has become a stomach for the group.

Trotter points out a fundamental difference between the union of cells to form a new unit, the body, and the integration of individuals to form a herd. In the former case the mechanisms for effecting co-operation of the parts are physiological—nervous connections and circulating chemicals—whereas in societies the bonds are psychological. The separate units are not in physical contact with each other and therefore must communicate by signals of some sort, the meaning of which has to be perceived by the members, which is a psychological performance. Trotter calls the system of signals the 'herd voice'. What its nature may be—even in one species—is a problem concerning which we know very little indeed. Many animals undoubtedly use cries which we too can hear, others use movements, gestures, which we can see but do not discriminate. Smell signals may be passed which we are completely incapable of sensing. Ignorant though we may be, we can be certain of this: in concerting their movements animals must communicate with each other either telepathically or through signals that are perceived; in either case the bond is psychological rather than physiological. Since among all social animals except insects there is no bodily specialization for different tasks, it would follow that what an individual does

### *THE 'HERD VOICE'*

in his service of the group is the result of his education. The herd voice instead of being merely a system of signals for the co-ordination of instinctive responses among the members of a group has evolved into a body of traditional group experience.

This is perhaps Trotter's most important contribution to the theory of society. Among the lower animals the herd coerces a unanimity of action because it dictates to each member which one of all its various potential kinds of instinctive behaviour it will follow and, when one instinct is in operation, stimuli for other kinds of behaviour do not lure it from the quest it is following. As we have seen earlier, it is characteristic of man that his conduct is determined more by thought than by crude instinct. So in human society the herd voice is translated into a system of rules which become part of the thinking equipment of the individual and are accepted by him as blindly as the yelp of the wolf leader is followed by his pack.

The rules can be grouped under two headings, two categories for which it is difficult to find terms that are not misleading. The trouble is that we are now considering generalities about man both past and present, both savage and civilized, and although we classify our motives and beliefs with labels that are fairly specific, primitive peoples have not and do not. For instance alchemy was originally an attempt to attain the highest virtue (in the moral sense) by transmuting baser metals into the purest (morally), which was gold. Was this a matter of practical ethics, of magic, or was it science because it was an application of the theories of the 'physics' of that day? Alchemy evolved into chemistry and is now a 'science'. But our descendants may call much of our chemistry folk-lore. The two headings we shall use really express directions in which the group tends to influence the individual in action and thought. These are unanimity in opinion as to what is fit and proper and unanimity in belief as to what are the effective agencies in the production of whatever man can observe in the universe or in himself. The former comprises standards of dress, deportment and so on, as well as canons



## MORALS

of morals and aesthetics that merge into each other. It is ethical in the widest sense, it determines what 'is done' or 'isn't done' in any society. The latter covers theories that at one moment seem to be myths, the next science, the next philosophy and the next religion. These might be summarized under the one word *reality*. The objective critic may call the alleged causes mere hypotheses or theories, but to those who hold them they are ultimate and indisputable: they are realities not open to question simply because they are never questioned.

The various peoples of the earth differ obviously in physique and colouring, yet they vary more in custom. There is no reason to suppose that our forefathers in the early stone age were not white, yet the difference between them and us is, probably, at least as great as that between us and the Zulus. A greater difference than that of colour is reflected in moral standards. As Stevenson says: 'The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong; and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured for a virtue and none where it is not branded for a vice; and we look in our experience, and find no congruity in the wisest rules, but at best a municipal fitness.' To those who have not examined the evidence these sound like wild, as well as cynical, generalizations. They are, however, not cynical because Stevenson uses them in an argument for man's nobility in devotion to whatever ideals he may have. They are not wild because it is difficult to find an example of what is with us a vice that is not elsewhere a virtue. Murder? Wherever there are feuds illegal killings are praised; duelling is hardly extinct; and there are many savage communities where homicide is essential to establishment of honourable citizenship. Incest? It was obligatory on the rulers of ancient Egypt, and the theory of keeping the blood pure on which that inbreeding was based survives in the intermarriage of royalty in modern Europe. What more 'natural', we should say, than the jealousy of a husband for the faithfulness of his wife? Yet

## MORALS

there are tribes where the duty of hospitality forces a host to give his wife (or his favourite wife) to a guest for the night. These topsy-turvy variations do not prove there is no absolute right and wrong; they merely demonstrate that man has yet to discover them or to agree as to the validity of the discoveries. Indeed the willingness with which man accepts rules which curb his natural lusts may be used as a proof for his moral nature. But when it comes to specific laws or conventions we are forced to admit that they are based on 'municipal fitness'.

If further proof of this were needed it could be found in the way in which a group need will force moral re-orientation on its members. The man who is the soul of honour in his private life will descend to sharp practices in the service of his club, his charity or his church. Duty to the 'gang' starts many a lad on the road of crime. But war, of course, yields the most complete development of the change in moral outlook dictated by the exigencies of the group, because here the changes are made not merely by common consent but are actually formally ratified by a declaration of war. What was yesterday murder becomes to-day justifiable homicide and praiseworthy to boot, and so with arson, forgery, swindling and theft. One could go on tediously enumerating examples of this kind of moral coercion which the community exerts on the individual. The list would seem to be formidable enough to convince any open-minded, objective enquirer. But who is open-minded? That introduces another problem. I may admit that what I learned at my mother's knee influenced me profoundly and that my moral outlook reflects in some measure the many group contacts of my life. But, from deep within me, comes an insistence that it is only in some measure. Blackmail, I feel, is a mean and horrid crime not because the law says so or my neighbours so asseverate, but because it just is. Something within me tells me so. That something I call my conscience and I am certain it is something personal not merely because it feels to be such but because I know my standards of conduct are different from those of my neighbours.

## *'MORALS'*

Some actions which I regard with loathing are viewed more tolerantly by others and vice versa. How can these conflicting conclusions be reconciled? The solution is derived from one of Trotter's most important principles. The influence exerted by the group on the individual is not recognized consciously by the latter as an external mandate which he obeys, but is unwittingly adopted and incorporated into the individual's personality: he 'makes it his own'. In this process of adoption there is a fusion of the various herd influences under which the subject may have been, but there is also a compromise reached between the rival claims of the herd and of the individual's selfish lusts. Thus 'moral development' is a complicated business, never the same in two people, and a never-ending process. With the waxing and waning of appetites and changes in social contacts conscience is gradually evolving, although it retains a certain consistency throughout. Such consistency is much more subjective than objective. The man who is tempted is aware of conflict and whether conscience triumphs or falls its attitude suffers no violent change. The sinner knows he is sinning. But put him under strong social pressure and he allows group judgment completely to oust his conscience. Without a qualm he indulges in actions that, in other situations, he would condemn roundly. An aggregation of kindly polite individuals may together form a rowdy audience that is not merely rude but may be actually cruel to an actor or speaker who does not amuse. More dramatic, and horrifying as an evidence of latent barbarism, is the brutal fury of the lynching mob. Kindly fathers, tender husbands, philanthropic citizens whose 'moral sense is outraged' by some crime will torture and kill the alleged victim, indifferent to his suffering or, perhaps, actually enjoying it. Where has individual moral judgment gone?

The answer takes us to the core of Trotter's theories. Man, be he never so individual, can never escape his biological fate of being a herd animal. As such he feels happy, secure and efficient when he is in contact with his fellows and, conversely, is disquieted, timid and

### *'REALITY'*

ineffective when cut off from them. Among animals the contact is immediate, is sensory. Among men, however, contact is translated into the field of ideas, of intellectual and moral judgments. We all know the panicky behaviour of the sheep separated from the flock. The man who would attempt to maintain the dictate of his conscience against mob fury finds himself an isolated pariah—he might even be attacked as an accomplice of the alleged criminal. He wants 'moral backing' and can find it only by joining the pack. He then gives himself up to that peculiar abandonment of self in a joint activity which yields an almost ecstatic pleasure, the pleasure of perfect drill, of singing in true unison, of rowing in a crew that has become one man. Conflict between individual and group standards no longer exists simply because there is no individual left. All that was peculiar to himself is gone: he has become an undifferentiated unit in that insensate monster we call a mob.

The second aspect of the pressure of society on its members is in the intellectual field. We can see, hear and feel for ourselves, and what we thus learn may be truly said to be individual knowledge. But when we try to work back from direct sensory experience to what may have caused the observed phenomenon we are in another field altogether. We now rely on what we are taught and this is a social heritage. Let us consider a typical example. Ever since man has been able consciously to observe anything he has seen the sun appear at one side of the little world he knew, travel across his sky, and disappear on the other side. There have been no changes in the phenomena observable by anybody—a flat, stationary earth and a moving sun. But what of explanations? What made the sun move, what was the sun, anyway? There have been innumerable myths about the god who rode his chariot across the heavens and so on. As observation of the stars and their courses improved, their movements were noted, but they too were deified or at least personified and they lived in a universe based and centred on an earth that, as everyone could see for himself, was flat and stationary. But there

## *‘REALITY’*

were occasional geniuses, men who rebelled against the herd intellectual domination, who were prepared to trust their reason even when it came into conflict with the evidence of their senses. These men, who were heretics and who did exhibit one of the earmarks of insanity, gradually built up an esoteric theory, a new faith for which they were prepared to suffer persecution and martyrdom. Little by little, progressing from generation to generation, the heresy gathered more adherents until it became the orthodoxy. At this point it became a new faith: the earth was round, not flat, and it moved both turning on its axis and travelling round the sun while the sun and other fixed stars stood still. Why should this be called a faith rather than a theory? Because it is accepted unquestioningly by the ordinary citizen on the basis of authority and not on the basis of his own observation and reasoning. ‘There is not one among a thousand of us who has made the observations on which astronomical laws are based or who has the mathematical training necessary for the deduction of those laws. Yet each of us does not say, ‘It is authoritatively stated that the earth moves and not the sun’. He says, rather, ‘I know that the earth moves and not the sun’.

It is with the difference between these two statements that we are concerned. As can be shewn in a myriad of examples, we accept the herd dictum uncritically but do not regard its adoption as an act of loyalty, we are not even aware of having adopted it. It is personal knowledge, we think, in spite of the fact that it conflicts with daily experience. What has happened is that the herd voice had made a pronouncement that is received uncritically by the individual member. It is not hard to memorize words, it is hard to think for one’s self, particularly when the independence will be interpreted by one’s fellows as eccentricity, lunacy or disloyalty. The pressure towards conformity is tremendous because nonconformity robs the individual of that feeling of security which contact with the herd brings. On the other hand we all prize the ability and right to think for ourselves. A comfortable compromise is reached by the process

## ‘REALITY’

which Trotter has called *rationalization*. The herd formula is accepted on purely emotional grounds but is not regarded as such by the individual, who treats it rather as the product of his own reasoning. He is able to do the latter because he bolsters the opinion up with a lot of other second-hand formulae, this ‘thinking’ justifying him in the conviction that the matter is something he has worked out for himself. The capacity for objective observation and elaboration of the data thus secured into original theory is, as a matter of sad fact, an extreme rarity; so, in that sense, individual knowledge is also a rarity. The ‘scientific truths’ which we espouse, like the morals we hold, are herd formulae. Before we accept this as a cynical conclusion, we ought to answer the question, ‘What would be the state of affairs if there were no such intellectual bondage?’ Remove this individual acceptance of authority and substitute scepticism for everything that is not individually observed and woven into a personal theoretic fabric and then the only possible science is that which one mind can compass. It is better to advance through a series of heresies and orthodoxies than to have no corporate science at all. At the moment we are beginning to emerge painfully from an age of materialistic philosophy that has been invaluable as the inspiration for applied science but has led to a neglect of other values, a neglect that is, perhaps, the ultimate cause of the present war. Our present problem, however, is concerned with more specific application of Trotter’s principles than with such necessarily vague speculations. The important thing to note is that the group dictates to the individual what he is to observe and how he is to interpret it, although he is unaware of the coercion.

## CHAPTER 4

### VARIABLE MORALE

WE are now in a position to consider an application of the principles enunciated in the last chapter in explanation of some of the simpler phenomena of morale. In discussing fear there was made, implicitly, an unjustifiable assumption. It was presumed that, in the presence of danger, a man was interested primarily in his own safety, that his 'instinct of self-preservation' was the sole, or constantly dominant, instinct controlling his behaviour. Actually, however, in the case of disciplined troops the very reverse is true. The soldier behaves, rather, as if he had lost all regard for his personal safety; or he may suddenly act as if *saue qui peut* was a divine command which he must obey; or he may alternate between these two extremes. Such variability does not occur among isolated soldiers: it is a group phenomenon. This is morale in one of its aspects, but there is another one as well. There may be a loyalty that outweighs all personal considerations, a loyalty exhibited by whole regiments or by a single soldier in a lonely outpost or by a martyr at the stake. We must first deal with variable morale.

Morale that is either strikingly good or glaringly bad means that there is unanimity of action in the group which is exhibiting gallantry or cowardice. We are constantly presented with an enormous number of stimuli which might evoke an equal number of different responses, but, actually, we normally neglect those irrelevant to the purpose in hand. When hastening to catch a train we do not stop to look in a shop window no matter how attractive the display. On the other hand, if someone were to throw a bomb in the street we should turn and run the other way. So, clearly, concentration on one kind of behaviour does not make us incapable of observing incitements to actions of a different kind. Any stimulus attracts our attention and

## *GROUP CONTROL OF INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION*

controls our behaviour in accordance with its meaning for us at the time. For a solitary animal the meaning is invariably one that concerns its welfare alone. But in herd animals another factor enters: an infectious imitation runs through the group which coerces attention to those stimuli that fit in with the activity adopted by the group as a unit. Reciprocally, sensitivity to stimuli for behaviour different from that on which the group is engaged is reduced, perhaps to the vanishing point. An illustration may make this clear. Every motorist has had the experience of seeing a bird flying directly towards his wind-screen and swerving off in a miraculous way just when it seems certain that it will crash. Now once, when I was driving on a country road, a large flock of starlings wheeled over the road, the formation being such as to bring the path of the innermost and lowest bird directly into my car. This bird then flew directly into my screen without making, apparently, the slightest effort to save itself, although the collision was predictable during at least fifty feet of the flight before impact. The direction of its flight was controlled by the formation, not by stimuli from the environment. This phenomenon may be generalized, in psychological jargon, by saying that social animals have a lowered threshold for stimuli arising within the group and a heightened threshold for all environmental stimuli not connected with the activity dictated by the group.

This formula enables us to understand what happens when a pack of wolves or wild dogs, or a swarm of ants, attacks a foe vastly more powerful than any one of the individual animals. They shew what we call 'reckless courage', and that is a good description, for the individual is so concentrated on attack that nothing irrelevant to the assault is visible or audible to him. He is courageous because he is unaware of danger. Animals are the creatures of their appetites and instincts. A bull moose who is 'wild' in the sense that he avoids man will during the rutting season not merely be indifferent to man as a possible enemy but, as an expression of his general bellicosity, charge at the man he meets accidentally. Animals are not 'brave' or



## IMITATION

'cowardly' as men may be, they merely give themselves exclusively to aggressive or flight behaviour in the face of danger.

Because the mental life of man and of the animals differs so greatly, it is a risky matter to transfer principles applicable in one of the evolutionary levels to another. In so far as it is permissible it can be done only by translating the instinctive type of mental operation into its human equivalent which is more or less intellectualized. That is to say, man, although he may do it with great rapidity, tends always to be conscious of what he does, his action is not just that of an incredibly complicated machine but of a machine that is directed—no matter how faultily—by some conscious judgment of the nature of the situation facing him and some prevision of the results of his behaviour. So our problem here is to see how the fact that a number of excited people form a group will affect the thinking of the individuals in that group.

As we have seen, an emergency does not allow of protracted planning, the only possible activities being those that are deeply habitual. These, however, may be of quite different natures and incompatible. If the individuals were alone when faced with the emergency, one might fight, another flee, while another coolly combined these methods in some manipulative activity, each acting in accordance with his temperament and prior experience. But the individuals are not alone and they are all herd animals. Therefore, during the inevitable period of indecision as to what programme each ought to follow, imitation comes into play determining the choice. This imitation is of one or the other of two kinds. If the situation is such as naturally to call forth one rather than another kind of emotion in the majority, that majority display this emotion instantaneously, the minority imitate them and the majority decision becomes a unanimous one. On the other hand, if there is no spontaneous majority, the group takes its cue from leaders. Before examining the phenomena of leadership we should note how imitation operates in the control of conscious mental processes.

## *DOMINANCE OF COMMUNAL JUDGMENT*

It has already been argued that society exerts pressure on the individual in both the moral and intellectual fields so that he develops a 'conscience' and an intellectual judgment that are essentially conventional although consciously regarded as personal; and certainly what the individual has incorporated into his personality is what governs his behaviour no matter what its origin may have been. That statement holds, however, only in so far as the individual remains isolated from his fellows or immune from their influence. The moment imitation sets in, conscience and independent intellectual judgment are weakened or submerged. The man who indulges a primitive blood lust when included in a lynching mob, or the man who tramples down children or weaklings in trying to escape from a burning building, is accepting the moral sanction of the immediate group. The sacrifice of individual critical judgment is exemplified in the credibility of rumours, the ridiculousness of which is apparent so soon as imitative response to an emergency has passed. A clever conjurer exploits mass judgment when he makes the individual, who thinks he sees how the trick is done, ridiculous. When a theatre catches fire and all the audience tries to escape from one exit, the crowd's judgment inhibits individual exploration of other routes to safety, while, at the same time, the mass assumption that the smoke means inevitable holocaust is unanimously adopted.

Variable morale on the field of battle is thus produced. It is not cowardly to run away because everybody is running. The attack of the enemy is so overwhelming that none could survive if he remained on the field and of what use to his country is a dead soldier? Contrariwise, the enemy will run away if we all make a charge and none of us will be hurt. If an odd man should make a stand, what fun it will be to run him through with a bayonet! Instead of fear there is exhilaration and a pleasurable indulgence in blood lust. If my companion falls at my side, that is just a bit of bad luck; we are winning, we are going forward which means that the enemy are prospective

## *LEADERS AS SENTINELS*

victims, not monsters who will destroy us. The pack is attacking and the problem of individual security does not arise.

In so far as we are dealing with variable morale that rests on imitation the function of leaders is essentially that of sentinels. Many birds and some mammals have sentinels. While the mass of the animals is engaged in feeding or other activity the sentinels watch for signs of danger. Whatever appears within the horizon of their watch is scrutinized. The behaviour of the sentinel consequent on this scrutiny acts as a signal for a common group activity. The scrutiny of a human leader may be brief and uncritical or it may involve hard and accurate thinking, but in either case he gives a signal that determines what all the members will do, imitation within the group inhibiting all tendency towards individual decision.

What makes a leader? If the answer could be given in a compact formula and one that could be used for the selection of leaders one of the most difficult and urgent social problems—either civil or military—could be met out of hand. Unfortunately the problem is so complicated that nothing short of a volume could contain the answer and no psychologist would dare to claim his solution was complete. One, perhaps the chief, source of complication is that leadership is qualified both by the nature of the leader and by the nature of the followers. The qualities which fit a man to lead a meeting in prayer may not be those required by the captain of a football team. These are clearly two quite different kinds of group; yet they might be composed of the same individuals, which means another complication. There is the character of the leader, the character of the followers and, thirdly, the nature of the problem which the group has to face. Leadership is not a simple, unitary capacity and so it cannot be simply described. Fortunately, however, the qualities possessed by the man who acts as a sentinel, who determines the choice between various imitative activities, can be described with relative completeness.

The most essential characteristic is conspicuousness. In an unor-

## *LEADERS AS SENTINELS*

ganized group this rests on his being physically an outstanding person in appearance or voice, or by his making himself the object of regard. The latter comes about in one or both of two ways. During the period of indecisive inactivity occasioned by an emergency one man may begin to act in a single-minded determined way and the others follow like sheep. This man may have no thought of being a leader; he is simply quicker than his fellows in finding—or losing—his wits. Or the leader-to-be may deliberately assume that rôle and make himself conspicuous. This is in a group that is quite fortuitous. Then there is the case of the group that is composed of people who know each other but have congregated for some purpose quite different from that which must actuate it when the emergency arises. For instance, a fire may break out in a school or a club. Conspicuousness may now rest on some one member in virtue of his being prominent in the activity which is the occasion for the gathering. If this man now accepts the rôle of leader by doing something decisive, he will be followed. Finally, there is the case of the leader who is made conspicuous artificially. This is a product of organization, and specifically of organization designed to control behaviour in emergencies of the kind which arises.

One of the features of all kinds of military organization is an artificial conspicuousness given to those who have been chosen to lead. This is accomplished on the one hand by special uniforms and insignia worn by all in whom authority is vested and on the other by training all ranks to turn for guidance to those of higher rank. Being thus appointed as sentinels, officers function as leaders when they make quick decisions and these decisions lead to group imitation of action thus initiated. If the signal given, in this case an order, be for an action that fits the emotional bias in the majority of the group, the order is popular and this leader performs a function that really does not extend beyond that of an animal sentinel. It is when the officer can enforce the adoption of behaviour that does not fit the spontaneous inclinations of the majority so that he is imitated in the

## *CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS*

first instance and, with the infection of joint action, all the soldiers imitate each other, it is then that the officer exhibits true leadership. On what does his prestige rest?

The greater part of an officer's prestige is derived, of course, from the system within which he works. If the habit of automatic obedience did not dower the officer with authority in an emergency, the morale of raw recruits would be as good as that of a well-disciplined army. Now, however, we are concerned with the personal characteristics that reinforce (or diminish) his prestige as an officer. Only the factors that make the good officer need be mentioned, for it is the mere absence or weakness of them that makes the poor one. In the first place he must be temperamentally ready to accept responsibility. This may be an inborn trait or it may be the result of his education, using that term in its broadest sense. This readiness is exhibited in quickness of decision and incisiveness in giving orders; no matter whether these orders are transmitted from higher command or fabricated after consultation with juniors, they must appear to emanate from the officer himself and be given with an assurance that assumes obedience. This self-confidence is exhibited vastly more in general bearing than in the verbal form of an order. A 'will you please' quietly spoken by the true leader commands a more immediate response than a bellow from one who is uncertain of himself and afraid of his own authority.

The second qualification of the good leader is complementary to what makes docility in the led and may be best understood by approaching it from that angle. It must be borne in mind that in this chapter we are dealing solely with variable morale which, as we have seen, may be traced to imitateness within a group. The man who imitates another has abrogated his right, or inclination, to think for himself. Although we prize the right and are prone to vaunt (to ourselves at least) our exercise of the capacity, making up our own minds is burdensome. Most of us, most of the time, prefer to have decisions made for us and to grumble at our bondage rather than direct our lives continually for ourselves. Self-direction is impossible

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without fully developed and persistently operating consciousness. This is absent in children, whose lives are controlled by appetites and habits built up by conditioning. On this basis there is gradually developed the conscious superstructure which enables the adult to plan his life. Children have to have their lives planned for them and they are unhappy when that regulation is absent. The fretful petulance of the undisciplined child is notorious. Not unnaturally the child craves guidance, a craving that is no less acute because of its inability consciously to recognize what it wants. This guidance is secured from parents or from those who stand *in loco parentis*. Few of us ever grow up completely and certainly the majority crave direction from someone who will play father to us. A good officer accepts and exploits this rôle. The exploitation is achieved by a nice adjustment of the two most important of a parent's duties, discipline and protection.

Ask any soldier about an officer whom he respects and whom, it is clear, he would follow and he will always speak of two characteristics. He is a strict, but fair, disciplinarian and he looks after his men. 'You know where you are with the captain', he will say. 'He's hard, you can't get away with anything with him, but he's fair.' Then he will balance this with anecdotes: how the captain will never eat or sleep till all his company are fed and billeted, how he once spent all one night looking for a soldier who was lost, and so on.

At every level of the military hierarchy there is this desire for authoritative direction and protection. Naturally at each level the kind of orders that are wanted and the kind of support that is sought changes. Lower down the men need bodily care and comfort and it is the heart, rather than the head, of the immediate commanding officer that matters. As one ascends, however, it is the reputations and careers of the junior officers that must be protected, while the higher the rank the more intellectual does the task of the senior officer become. (We are concerned here solely with the actual command of men, not with the qualifications of the purely staff officer.) Throughout the whole scale, however, the same principle holds: the

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good officer is one who fulfils a demand for direction, not one who simply imposes his personality on those beneath him. Common sense is apt to recognize only the latter, but that is because childlike dependence is not consciously recognized by those who exhibit it. To admit it would be to deny one's right and capacity to think for one's self, so it remains an unconscious craving. Being unconscious it becomes the basis of a mutual relationship that is labelled by the soldier not as one of dependence but as of respect for the officer's virtue as an officer, or respect for the system which the officer represents. But there is a more important result of its being unconscious. In any emergency there tends to be an abandonment of conscious guidance of behaviour and a reversion to instincts and habits that are automatic, that are unconsciously incited. The graver the emergency, i.e. the less consciousness is able to grapple with the problem, the greater is the tendency to fall back on earlier and primitive tendencies; in other words the more does the man become the child. So in grave danger the average individual will look about for someone who is prepared to play a parental rôle. The immediately commanding officer has all eyes turned on him inevitably; his actions are the ones that will be imitated. If he is made of the right stuff the emergency will, just as automatically, induce in him a tendency to guide and guard those under his command. Morale will then be good. On the other hand, if he is not a true leader, the emergency will make him too one who looks for direction. His indecision will then indicate to the group that nothing effective can be done, and confusion will be worse confounded.

By way of postscripts to this argument two comments may be worth recording.

The first is that a system of training and discipline which produces automatic obedience to commands and, *ipso facto*, reliance on officers is one that inevitably favours variable morale. If there were a sufficient supply of good officers and if they never became casualties in battle, such training would produce perfect troops, particularly in operations involving large formations. But, of course, contemporary warfare

## *DISCIPLINE VERSUS RESOURCEFULNESS*

demands versatility and resource in very small units, while the supply of invulnerable officers is limited. Therefore any training which tends to automatize soldiers must be deliberately balanced with exercises that neutralize that tendency. At the same time everything possible should be done to foster the spirit of willingness for sacrifice which is the foundation of the highest, and unchangeable, morale.

The second postscript is a mere mention at this point of an interesting change in German military theory. Under the combined influence of National Socialism in the political field and of total warfare and mechanization in the military, theory as to the relations of officers to men has been revolutionized. On the one hand the class system has been abolished (on paper at least) and on the other hand the necessity for initiative even among privates has been recognized. To meet these changes two policies have been adopted. Training now includes a variety of manœuvres in which individuals, or very small groups, are required to exercise independent judgment and resource. But this, it has been realized, is not enough. The old Prussian system which made the officer into a demigod and the private into a slave, fixing a social gulf between them, was one, it is now thought, which tended to make the soldier into a robot. So the private soldier has been given a personality by decree and it is ordained that his officer shall be acquainted with this individual as a person and not as a number. There is a large corps of highly (or at least lengthily) trained psychologists who aid in selection and give advice as to treatment of neurotic difficulties, but the bulk of responsibility in dealing with personal problems is placed on the shoulders of the officers, who are required to interview all problem cases informally and in 'man to man' talks. We are entitled to some scepticism as to the thoroughness of such a revolutionary change of attitude, but it would be folly for us to neglect it in our estimate of probable enemy morale. We may at least be certain that, if the revolution has been accomplished, the German company or platoon will now fight more like a family and less like a machine.



## CHAPTER 5

### NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

As we have seen, variable morale is due to a state of excitement in which the individual is forgetful of self when morale is 'good' or, when it is 'bad', a mental contagion encourages him to think of himself alone. But the morale which has been the one enduring and consistent asset of the British people throughout their wars in the past is not this mercurial emotional display but a capacity to endure tribulation undismayed. Indeed the tradition has even grown up that Britain can be stirred to victorious effort only by a series of defeats. This is not just forgetfulness of self. It bespeaks, rather, an orientation away from pure self-interest to an alliance and identification with a cause so momentous that the mundane fate of the individual becomes insignificant.

A cheerful renunciation of life is a commonplace of history and anthropology. Among many savage peoples there is a readiness to die, to be a human sacrifice in the performance of some ritual, that is extraordinary to us because we assume that life must be dear to everyone. If we lived in a culture where belief in survival after bodily death was completely unquestioned so that 'death' was but an incident in the course of life, such abandonment of the body would not seem remarkable. Similarly vivid belief has undoubtedly supported martyrs in our own culture. So we might, perhaps, suppose that it is religion which enables man to be indifferent to death. There are, however, too many cases of such abnegation among those with no avowed religion. Public honour has been given to medical investigators who have inoculated themselves with fell diseases. Then there is the explorer who, like Scott, *Quaesivit arcana poli videt dei*.<sup>1</sup> The list is long and it is glorious but it is of distinguished names.

<sup>1</sup> This is the motto over the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge and may be translated: 'He sought the mystery of the pole and sees God's.'

## *MORALE AS ENDURANCE UNTO DEATH*

These heroes, we might assume, had a secret religion, perhaps even a faith that was unconscious. At the very least they were avowed idealists. But what of the myriads of peasant folk who have been faithful unto death, people too dull, too unlettered even to grasp the meaning of 'A peerage or Westminster Abbey'? What upheld them in the day of trial?

Again, what was the trial? In glib journalese we talk about 'the supreme sacrifice', but is the mere maintenance of life what we value most highly? It would seem not, but rather that death is a conventional symbol for what is most undesirable. Suicide is by no means uncommon and for one person who achieves that end there are, perhaps, a score who consider it at one time or another. William James remarks somewhere that no man is truly educated who has not seriously contemplated suicide. Although we all know that, one day, we shall die, fear of this remote end is actually a sign of abnormality. What does frighten us is the prospect of imminent death. That is, we are, so to speak, not afraid of dying but we are afraid of being killed, killed by injury from without or by some particular disease from within. In other words thought of death, i.e. death as an idea of ceasing to be, is not terrifying. It is the situation, real or vividly imagined, of being struck down which excites the so-called instinct of self-preservation. As we have seen, danger may excite various activities and there is no fear so long as the activity chosen absorbs attention; it is when attention is turned to the ineffectiveness of what is done that fear appears. Ineffectiveness means death, therefore the thought of death in an emergency is inevitably associated with fear. But if death is regarded as the last event in a programme of action deliberately adopted it no longer means an ineffective struggle. If, further, the programme involves suffering deliberately endured, the prospect of death is a vision of release, perhaps of paradise. It is important in connection with morale, which is patience in adversity, to realize that noble death involves prior suffering and cannot be a euthanasia. Hence suicide according

## WHAT IS THE CORE OF NATIONALISM?

to *bushido* ethics had to be by *hara-kiri*: the object of death could be accomplished only if the hero disembowelled himself.

Endurance of this kind is completely inexplicable on the basis of self-interest unless there is an unquestioned belief in the suffering being a small price to pay for a certain translation to paradise. Many religions incorporate such beliefs, but the phenomenon is not confined to the avowedly religious. So we must look for something that operates as does religion to fortify, uphold and inspire man in the hour of adversity. The phenomenon is observable among creative artists and scientists, but such people are exceptional. The rank and file of an army or of a civil population may shew it, however, and for their inspiration we have a name—patriotism. But what is patriotism and where does it come from? Is it a universal human virtue or is it something appearing only in some countries? Are the patriotisms of Englishmen, Chinese, Russians, Germans or Japanese all the same? Each represents co-operation in national endeavour. If the endeavours are different does that reflect on patriotism and therefore produce different types of morale? Again, what is it that the patriot serves? A national flag is only a symbol and so, largely, is a king under a limited monarchy. To what are we referring when we discuss whether France has, or has not, lost her soul or when we say that, to save her soul, France must revolt against the power that occupies her territory? What is it that makes the typical Englishman, German and Frenchman different? They have, of course, been moulded by different laws and conventions, but what has so guided the morals and customs of a nation as to make them into a system sufficiently consistent to produce a type? A complete answer to any one of these questions is impossible but, if it could be shewn that an answer to one would provide an answer to the others, then it would be demonstrated that there is only one unknown factor, not many, and that this *X* was capable of description even though it was as impalpable as, say, gravitation.

During the course of its evolution a people develops gradually a

## NATIONAL UNCONSCIOUS IDEALS

feeling of nationality, of being a folk different from its neighbours. This is not just the difference which an objective savage might observe between the customs, morals and beliefs of his own and neighbouring cultures. It concerns, rather, a way of living, jealously guarded as a national asset and believed to be something that it would be well for the rest of the world to enjoy. It is a 'chosen people' kind of belief. It is, if you will, a scale of values (of which more later). It may grow quickly as the policy of a series of dictators whose success endures long enough to become traditional, and is then apt to be something well enough defined to be enshrined in a more or less accurate formula which becomes a shibboleth. Or it may evolve slowly, insensibly, in custom and tradition as a point of view that is rarely and fitfully expressed in legislation or the comment of some political philosopher. At first there is just a general social conscience as to what is, or is not, done, a reference to a morality that is superior to that of the benighted foreigner. Then there emerges slowly a feeling of direction in it all, something that is a striving towards a perfecting of the national virtues as they are being discriminated and towards a universalizing of these benefits if the people are of an aggressive, missionary type.

This *X* we might label the soul of the people, as is done in common speech, but such a name carries with it an implication of the mystical, of something spiritual, and therefore outside the field that can be studied scientifically. I therefore prefer to call it an *unconscious ideal*. There are two interrelated reasons for its being unconscious. First, the objective is more of a process than a static goal, so that it is betrayed in a feeling of rightness or wrongness that qualifies proposals for national action rather than in a formulated code. Secondly, the ideal is a possession of the group as a whole and the only consciousness of which we have direct knowledge is an individual one. Individual consciousness can have awareness for the customs, rituals, emblems and so forth that symbolize the group spirit but it cannot cognize directly what is a diffuse, social influence.

## EVOLUTION OF GROUP IDEALS

How a national unconscious ideal grows up may be understood by considering some examples of the same process in smaller groups. Every group that is not just a fortuitous crowd of people comes together for some object which constitutes the conscious *raison d'être* of the organization, but, in addition to this, it may develop an *esprit de corps*. For instance, a number of people with small savings pool them in order to raise capital sufficient for the purchase of a manufacturing plant. The primary object of the association is purely economic: each member hopes to get a larger return on his capital than would be possible if he employed it in a one-man business. Initially the management is instructed to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest, while the quality of the product is to be such as to ensure its sale: motivation includes nothing that could be called either philanthropic or patriotic. Similarly, the employees are lured into selling their labour by an offer of wages higher than they can get elsewhere; their hire is, on both sides, a bargain based on labour being a commodity the price of which is governed by the laws of supply and demand. But this simple motivation does not remain in exclusive possession of the field. Indeed, if it does, the life of the business is apt to be only a fair-weather one.

Management and labour form together a group that becomes more closely knit as time goes on. Hand in hand various group loyalties grow up and cut across the primary economic motive. The management develops an interest in the workmen both individually and collectively; the employees reciprocate with an interest in the firm as such: both unite in having a pride in the quality of what the factory turns out. If times are bad the management may continue to run the business, even at a loss, so as to continue employment; at the same time the work-people may accept lower wages during the emergency—may, indeed, even propose this makeshift. Or, when the firm's product has gained a reputation, there may be a refusal to trade on that by reducing the quality and selling at the same price. The pride of both masters and men may rebel against what would,

## *GROUP DANGER A SIGNAL FOR LOYALTY*

obviously, be 'good business'. It is clear that such loyalties are most apt to develop in small companies where personal contact between employers and employees is possible and are increasingly limited as the concerns grow into 'soulless corporations'. It is probably for this reason that our oldest businesses, that have endured for generations, are almost entirely family ones. But it is equally clear that there is a definite limit to the development of non-economic ideals in a business. Philanthropy eats into profits and, if profits disappear, the business fails and ceases to exist. No economic organization can, therefore, go very far along this road of idealism.

But that limitation does not operate with groups that are formed for social, charitable, educational or religious purposes. We have our clubs, City companies, hospitals, schools and colleges that are centuries old, while the Roman Catholic Church shews a virility that has outlasted that of mighty empires. When one examines these ancient institutions they are seen to present two features that are important for an understanding of morale.

The first is that the loyalty of its members is proportionate to the needs of the organization and not to whatever benefit might be available to individual members. It is true that membership may in some cases offer something of snob value, but that is secured once for all on entrance, and subsequent service can benefit the giver only indirectly, the primary and obvious beneficiary being the group as a whole. Enduring institutions offer no reasonable, material reward for services rendered. This is borne out by observation of the occasions which promote the greatest exhibitions of loyalty. They are either opportunities for expansion of philanthropic efforts or—more effective—a threat of curtailment or cessation of these activities. We all of us belong to many groups each one of which asks us periodically to give 'all you can afford'. How are rival claims satisfied? Almost invariably, I think, one of two factors is decisive. If the organization is threatened with extinction that one will get a generous contribution. If, as during a depression, two groups are in similar plight, we

## *IMMORTALITY OF GROUPS*

give to that which is the more philanthropic. Most men would prefer to see their golf club go under to seeing their old school disappear. The phenomenon of loyal sacrifice is, of course, most signally represented in national affairs. During peace patriotism may seem to be dead, with individualism and sectionalism apparently disintegrating the country. But let the nation be threatened and these interests melt away in patriotic zeal. The danger need not be that of war. Hitler thought (or at least said) that this country was degenerate and, indeed, some of his gibes have been proved to be only too tragically justified, but he ought to have read the moral of the 1931 general election. Communities that were living on the dole voted for its reduction. It sometimes seems as if our politicians would never learn that patriotic service can never be secured by bribes but that it will be offered freely if a demand for sacrifice is made. So significant is this phenomenon that I believe a nation that does not respond to such an appeal is moribund.

The second feature to be noted in ancient institutions has to do with what is felt to be its membership. The traditions of a society have been established and been maintained throughout many generations and at the same time its goal, its quest, its ideal has been gradually forming, being in each generation modified, fortified or diminished. The membership of such groups is, therefore, not confined to those who are alive and can communicate with each other at any point in time. It is felt, rather, to extend from the distant past to the remote future. This is betrayed in an interesting habit of speech, the use of the first person plural in reference to the actions of people long dead or not yet born. We defeated Oxford in the boat race a century ago (or was it the other way round?) and we hope to beat them in the year 2000. If I say to a member of another college, 'What happened to your Royal Arms during the Commonwealth?' he does not reply, 'I wasn't alive then' nor does he refer to the action of the seventeenth-century Governing Body. Without any sign of there being anything remarkable in his choice of words

## *DISPERSAL IN TIME AND SPACE*

he says, 'Oh, we hid them'. Similarly, if I ask, 'How will you be investing your money in the year 2000?' he may answer, 'I expect we shall be switching from land to Consols'. Such remarks might reflect merely the obvious continuity of a Governing Body. But when 'we' is used nationally it seems to refer to those past, present and future who have upheld the national tradition. Those who adopt the tradition, not being born into it, have a right to claim its founders as ancestors; one who breaks away, regards himself as disinherited. For instance, a Scot, whose nation was foreign in the sixteenth century, has no hesitation in saying, 'We defeated the Spanish Armada'. A Canadian or Australian might make the same statement but an American could not, although he might be a direct descendant of one of Elizabeth's captains.

The significance for national morale of these features of organizations dispersed in space and time should be fairly obvious. Biologically it would seem that morale is bound up with the compulsion of herd animals to orient their lives to activities serving group rather than individual needs. In human society the group tends to be identified with what it stands for collectively. Then the member has to ally himself with this ideal: when he does so he enjoys the security of a sheep within the flock; if he fails to do so, he is a pariah and is bewildered as a sheep separated from its fellows. In this alliance, however, there is a re-orientation of survival values. It is the group that must be preserved, the individual lives in and for it, having (so far as the alliance is complete) no separate existence. In return the member gains title to the power and the glory of the group, winning a share that is proportionate to his service. The Etonian feels superior to the Wykehamist (or vice versa) in proportion to the superiority he attributes to his school. This may be trivial, but an arrogant attitude towards foreigners is a serious matter, being one of the most important factors in producing and maintaining international friction—particularly when the feeling is mutual. It must be borne in mind, of course, that such developments are not the product of conscious



## *BELIEF IN SURVIVAL*

reasoning. They are emotional attitudes and such reasoning as there may be is unconscious or else a rationalization justifying a bias that originates unconsciously.

It will now be seen that, according to this argument, there can develop in a civilized and sophisticated man an unconscious belief that is analogous to the faith of his more primitive brother who will be translated directly to paradise if he dies fighting the infidel. An animal running with the pack acts as if its security, its invulnerability, was equal to that of the whole pack; a soldier in a charge is unaware of personal risk or neglects it while he is exhilarated by the prospect of imminent victory; the patriot sacrifices selfish interests in service of an ideal in return for identification with an ideal that is the sign, symbol, the very incorporation of a huge group, larger than any he can ever know in person. Primitive herd instinct operating through simple imitation thus evolves at the human level into an idealism that surmounts the instinct of self-preservation. This formulation carries with it two important corollaries. The first is that the payment for self-abnegation being the prestige and power of the group which invests the individual, the larger the group the more will sacrifice be worth while. No man would beggar himself in the service of his bridge club, but his fortune or a life-time's service may seem small payments for the feeling of rightness, of moral security, which he enjoys. The only groups large enough to justify complete abnegation are religious and national ones.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore inevitable that patriotism and piety should resemble each other in many features. In times past vastly more study has been given to piety than to patriotism so that the former has a vocabulary which the latter lacks. It is natural, then, that a psychologist in discussing the phenomena of patriotism should use terms belonging originally to religion, even

<sup>1</sup> This statement holds for the general run of common folk. Those who devote themselves to art, learning or research with a similar selflessness may provide an exception. But it is legitimate to argue that they are men specialized for particular services to the same groups. Their analogues in the animal world would be the insects whose bodies are specialized for tasks of value to the colony.

## AFTER DEATH

to theology. This is unfortunate because, to the uncritical, it may seem that problems are being solved by the invocation of mystical, spiritual agencies, whereas there is no such intention.

The second corollary is that, since a group ideal belongs to a succession of generations and not to any one alone, the individual has his day and is gone, the generation too is mortal but the group as a whole is, by contrast, immortal. It follows that the patriot who through his service participates in the glory of his nation can, if he dies in that service, achieve the immortality enjoyed by the nation or even that of all nations that subscribe to a common cause: it is a passage from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant.

There's but one task for all,  
One life for each to give.  
What stands if freedom fall?  
Who dies if England live?

If this argument is sound, national endurance must be as sturdy as the nation is felt to be extensive. There are two dimensions for this extension, time and space. A nation may, on the one hand, base its morale on the immensity of its population or the world-wide distribution of those who worship its ideal; or, on the other hand, it may rely on its ancient tradition of victory; or, of course, a nation fortunate enough to enjoy wide range both in numbers and history may draw its inspiration from both. Two conclusions could be drawn from these principles. The first is that a small group with no traditions, a group that is purely political and not religious, should be expected to have poor morale. Can history give an example to disprove this? The second is that nations varying in possession of these assets should have morales that differ in vulnerability. The nature of the unconscious ideal will affect a people's fortitude, and that is a problem to be discussed in the next chapter, but we may glance now at the influence which the size and age of political groups have on their morale.

Asiatics, as compared with West Europeans, breed prolifically, have a majority of the population living precariously near the starva-

## FATALISM AND

tion level, and are accustomed to the loss of thousands, even millions, by pestilence, famine or flood. This has resulted in an indifference to death that is astonishing to us. It can, perhaps, be traced to two general factors: individual experience and communal belief.

As we saw in the first chapter, we are more afraid of dangers we imagine than those we have experienced and survived. If the hazard is from forces beyond human control, the survivor tends to adopt a fatalistic philosophy. Thus we find that, roughly, fatalism is commonest in those parts of the world where material culture has been least successful in protection against the perturbations of nature. The fatalist sits with folded hands awaiting the blow that is to end him or that will miss him according to the vagary of fortune. Nothing that he can do will save him so he does not try and, making no effort, is not subject to the immobilizing of urgent impulse which is so essential a component of the fear reaction. This negative attitude does not of itself produce courageous resistance, but it may contribute to it. As has been mentioned, it is more difficult to face misery than death. That may be because the misery which is intolerable in imagination is that to which no end can be seen except death. We can screw up our courage to visit the dentist for a brief session of agony, but who would not rather let his teeth rot than undergo treatment the pain of which would eventually kill? The people of China are familiar with flood, famine and pestilence. For many years, too, they have known what invasion means—invasion in this case being by bandits or the armies of the War Lords. The situation in Russia is not dissimilar, and we must remember that Russians are largely oriental. They have known famine, forced migrations and ‘liquidation’ of whole economic groups. An invader can terrify neither of these peoples with a threat of the unknown. If resistance to an army of occupation is going to bring only retribution such as has already been survived, why not resist? Japan should have considered this simple psychological principle when she invaded China in 1937. Untaught by this example, Hitler made an even greater blunder when

## IMMORTALITY

he invaded Russia in 1941. He ought to have realized that it takes a larger army to hold down a vast, widely dispersed and hostile population than it does to capture the key-points of its country. That was why, with no expectation of effective opposition by the Red army, I was sure that Hitler had started on the downhill path when he turned East.

The communal faith which co-operates with fatalism is belief in immortality, particularly when death means a translation to life with the spiritual group, meaning by 'spiritual' the members with whom actual contact in this life is unthinkable. Unimaginable contacts are those with men of similar patriotic fervour who are dead or not yet born, on the one hand, or those who live so far away that they could not be all visited. If the magnitude in numbers and dispersal of the national population is such as to make it a world in itself, its total destruction is not imaginable. In this small island we can imagine all the inhabitants being wiped out by a tidal wave; but such a catastrophe is unthinkable for the denizens of a large continental area, particularly if it is densely populated. The suggestion of such a disaster is inevitably countered by the conviction that there would certainly be a lot of people left.

The dispersal of the group through time is, however, much more important because it is so prone to be associated with either a patriotism that is actually a religion or with one that is, psychologically, of a religious character.

The best example of this is in Japan. Its recorded history extends for about 1500 years but, by tradition, the Japanese have been a nation for a much longer period. Other peoples may be able to claim some kind of a continuity of culture for as long, or a longer, period, but none can shew anything like such a protracted, conscious nationalism. This is bound up with, and symbolized in, the divinity of the Emperor. The belief is not a mere metaphor in the minds of modern sophisticated subjects, a relic of the primitive belief in a tribal god. It is an active, conscious faith, it seems. Although for

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some centuries political power was wielded by hereditary 'prime ministers', there has been at no time even a suggestion that the Emperor's office could be dispensed with or that his person could be violable. In modern times and among peoples who are civilized (at least in material culture) there may be a tendency to subordinate ecclesiastical to temporal power and, as we have seen, patriotism is, psychologically, analogous to religion. But in Japan the two are literally one. The primitive religion was Shintoism, of which Sir Charles Eliot says: 'Shinto makes no appeal to reason or emotion . . . it has no moral code; its prayers and sacrifices aim at obtaining temporal prosperity and indicate no desire for moral or spiritual blessings. Yet these strange lacunae are somehow filled by its intensely patriotic spirit. For it Japan is the land of the Gods; the greater preside over the Empire, the lesser over towns and hamlets; the noble or humble dead have their due place in the cult of the state, city or family.' The spirits of the dead are not in any heaven or hell but are potent to produce weal or woe for the living. These ghosts are placated by offerings or are induced to favour the worshippers by repetition of ritual prayers, which are, in effect, incantations. This is, from our point of view, a primitive religion and its survival alongside an advanced material and intellectual culture is so remarkable as to make it of crucial significance in understanding Japanese character. It was apparently submerged in Buddhism some 1300 years ago, but the result was an amalgamation that gave the latter a national form, that made it a national, rather than a universal, religion. But perhaps the strangest phenomenon is that during the eighteenth century there was a successful movement in favour of a return to a pure Shinto, this at the time when Europe was becoming most sophisticated. In 1927 there were in Japan some 16 million Shintoists and 46 million ostensible Buddhists. Such statistics might reflect mere formal designations but popular demonstrations confirm the survival of primitive religion. Within the last half-century a successful general in Formosa has had a Shinto temple dedicated to him and it is one

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of the principal sights in that island. Very early in Japanese history retainers committed suicide on the death of their lord in order to follow him into the next world. At about the beginning of the Christian era the burial of images of the followers was substituted for actual death under imperial edict. But the custom was revived during the feudal period, was forbidden in 1744, and has survived in isolated cases. In September 1912 General Nogi and his wife committed *hara-kiri* on the death of the Emperor. Since then this couple has been venerated as an example to the youth of Japan.

It seems then that—ridiculous as it may seem to us—the Japanese believe themselves to be a divine people. As such they are superior to all other, merely human, peoples. This may account for an insularity that is much more extensive than any to be expected as a result of their geographic situation. England might never have succeeded in developing its peculiar system of political and moral ideals if it had not been through many centuries immune to invasion. But the British people have regarded this system as something of value for the whole world. Here the parallel between the two island peoples, that is striking in several respects, changes to a marked divergence. Foreigners are, to the Japanese, like members of another species. Humanity is not in their vocabulary. Either they have excluded foreigners, as they did during some centuries, or else they borrow from them and return nothing. Their earlier culture in all its aspects was derived from China. When contact with Europe was established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was some attempt to copy what could be learned from the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English, but this was soon abandoned in favour of exclusion. When in the nineteenth century contact with European culture was sought it was only with the intent to profit by it. We have long been familiar with the cheapness of Japanese goods, but has anyone ever heard of their exporting something of a quality unobtainable elsewhere? Quite possibly the Japanese lack of originality is correlated with their insularity. They are not without idealism but their ideals

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are centred in their nationalism. They copy everything from theology to engineering that can be used in the interest of Japan, while the object of trade with the outside world is profit for Japan. The statement that science and art know no national boundaries would be meaningless to them. Perhaps it is this intense nationalism that inhibits devotion to science or learning as objects in themselves and, with this, cuts off the desire for originality at its source. At any rate the discrepancy between their industry and intelligence on the one hand and their originality on the other is phenomenal. Another evidence of their self-centredness is their lack of a missionary spirit. Japanese will emigrate to earn a living, to act as spies or fifth columnists, but they seem to have no zeal for the conversion of foreigners to Japanese ideals in either the religious or political fields.

This egregious insularity is naturally reflected in the manner of their waging war. Tricking a potential enemy diplomatically is no more immoral than snaring a rabbit is to us. To warn the enemy by a declaration of war is as silly as to blow a horn when stalking a deer. Japanese self-sufficiency has an equally important effect on their morale. Their national faith teaches each citizen that his life in this world is but an incident; lovers vow to be faithful, not till death, but for seven incarnations. Death as such has no terrors for such people, and indeed it provides an easy escape from intolerable situations. Naturally the suicide rate is high, although lower than that in Germanic countries. This may be because the honourable form of suicide is a terrible ordeal. The important place in our culture which morals hold is taken in Japan by aesthetics according to some authorities. But they have produced one system of ethics, namely Bushido, which was the code of the Samurai or warrior caste. It eschewed money and all kinds of soft living while it extolled hardihood, toughness, endurance. The Samurai are, officially, no more, but their tradition—particularly among the upper classes—lives on and supplies the moral element that is lacking in Shintoism. The result of this is that the lust for self-preservation and aggrandizement

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concerns the status of a life persisting through mortal generations and merged into a life that is vastly greater, namely that of the national, immortal, even divine group.

It seems, then, that the Japanese character is such as to fulfil the conditions for perfect morale which we have laid down. Single defeats, even those that obviously presage ultimate disaster, should not dishearten this warrior nation. If they surrender it will be for purely tactical reasons and will not swerve them from their purpose. I can see no cure for this cancer in the body of humanity except its extirpation. Perhaps, because we are dealing with psychological and not physiological factors, the 'cancer' will starve itself to death. Certainly when defeated Japan will be impoverished; with the bankruptcy of its ideology its people will revert to barbarism with a reduced population or else, one must hope, self-preservation may encourage first a formal, and later a genuine, spirit of humanity, a dropping of their archaic isolationism in favour of co-operation with the rest of mankind. Barring this conversion the extinction of Japan would seem inevitable, for its ethos allows only of the alternatives of world dominion or suicide. For the present, however, it would seem that psychological considerations do not justify any hope of a breakdown in Japanese morale but at least they indicate the possibility of their tactics becoming suicidal. Once the A.B.C.D. Powers gain the upper hand in equipment their enemy is unlikely to retreat, as would be tactically advisable, but may well commit *hara-kiri* on a grand scale by pitting mere bodies against machine guns. So the destruction of their armed forces, when it once begins, may be rapid.

Wide dispersal of the national group is of similar importance in psychological conjectures about Chinese morale. Here dispersal in space assumes an importance denied to that factor in Japan, whereas its culture has a conscious antiquity more extensive than that of its upstart neighbour. Everything that has been said about oriental disregard of death and misery is truer of China than of any other country with the possible exception of India. So we may be confident



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that the individual combatant will shew a fatalistic stoicism. But how will hope or fear as to the survival of his country be affected by reverses? The Chinese have seen whole provinces nearly wiped out by famine or flood and learned that such cataclysms are but temporary. China is so vast, both in numbers and area, that it must be difficult for any of its inhabitants to envisage it as less than a world in itself. It has no one capital, either political or economic, that is essential for the maintenance of national life. It is like a sponge or a jelly-fish that can be stabbed here, there, anywhere, without its vitality being seriously reduced. No matter how many invaders penetrate his country, the Chinaman sees many more of his fellows than of his enemies; he sees them in the streets, in the fields, in the factories: Chinese life is going on as it has for thousands of years. The enemy is an insect that can sting, not a wolf that can take him by the throat, because China has, psychologically, no throat. It hasn't that kind of a body. Indeed it is not a body at all; it is a spirit as old as history and inspiring the Chinese wherever they are behaving like Chinamen.

But what is this China, this idea of a nation? Here we meet with another contrast in comparison with Japan. National consciousness has been intense in the island but weak in the continent. Is there any psychological reason why geography should have this effect? There is. Every man owes loyalty to a number of groups which do not call on him for service equally and continuously. He tends to devote himself to whatever group is threatened or is presented with an opportunity for expansion of its interests. When his business demands his attention, he behaves as if he had lost interest in his family, while if there is family illness he may neglect his trade or profession. What excites national unity, what makes the citizen aware of his citizenship, is contact with the outer world, i.e. international rivalry. Reminders of this rivalry come to those who have contact with foreigners and this contact takes place chiefly at the periphery of the state. (Facile intercommunication between parts of the country naturally spreads

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knowledge of the foreigner, but this never annihilates the primacy of direct contact. Isolationism is as inevitable in the centre of the United States as it is impossible in Switzerland.) Roughly, the length of its borders increases arithmetically while its area increases geometrically, when any country grows larger. It follows therefore that the bigger a country is in area the larger will be its internal population as compared with that in the zone of contact with foreigners. Sea-borne pirates, traders and fishermen have kept a large proportion of the Japanese aware of their own nationality. In China, on the other hand, most of its millions have throughout the centuries had no reason to regard foreigners as anything but legendary. China has been for centuries the world of the average Chinaman and therefore the consciously patriotic Chinaman has been as rare as is the true 'citizen of the world' with us.

The focal point for Japanese loyalty has been the Divine Emperor, but the Chinese emperor has not been divine—he has even been a foreigner, a Manchu, for example. The central national authority has therefore been for the Chinaman a convenience or an irritation, not anything it was a duty and privilege to serve. But this does not mean that there has been no unifying agency in Chinese society. It has been one most signally absent in Japan, namely ethics. Confucius lived and taught some 2500 years ago, yet his name is still revered in China. This does not mean that Confucianism enshrines the soul of China, but it does mean that a community in moral outlook is, and has been, held to be essential. People with unanimity in their views of right and wrong cannot fight each other for long. Confucius taught not merely that each one must play the part which his position in society gave him but also that ceremony is essential in the maintenance of human relations. In our culture it may not be true that 'Manners maketh man', but certainly manners maketh the Chinaman. If 'China' is unified by an ethical system as other lands are by religious, economic, political or military ideals, then we must note that the system is not labelled 'Chinese'. The ethics of Confucius

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were for all mankind, not just for the denizens of Eastern Asia. This would supply the element of universality which is so important in an ideal on which morale may be based.

But mere similarity in custom and outlook does not of itself produce loyalty, the latter has to be focused on and organized round something which can symbolize unity, that is, something which can be consciously apprehended and consciously served. In China this has been the family. Ancestor worship is universal, the various generations live together ruled by the head of the family of the moment and, when he dies, it is only a matter of *Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi*. Business, although it may seem to be that of an individual merchant, is really conducted in the interests of the family and its policy is that of the family. Most important of all, perhaps, is that the individual is not held to be a free moral agent: his behaviour is governed by the family code, the family honour. For instance, it is said that a bargain made by an individual in his own name has not been considered to be necessarily binding, whereas one made in the name of the family has been sacrosanct; to go back on that would be to disgrace the family and therefore to call down on the sinner the wrath of countless generations of forebears as well as the disapprobation of contemporary relatives. The Chinaman has therefore lived in communion with an immortal group and his life has been part of its life.

This identification has not been only an habitual, and perhaps unconscious, attitude; it has been conscious, expressed in various precepts and reinforced by daily worship of the ancestors who have their home in a shrine that is part of the family compound. Equally conscious has been the relegation of patriotism to a secondary position. How can a people who have for centuries regarded fighting as being beneath the dignity of the well-born, who rated soldiers with dustmen in the social scale, now become not merely patriotic but belligerently so? If we were dealing only with conscious factors there could be only one answer. Superficially viewed China is only as old as its Republic and, when attacked by Japan, it was still rent by the

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rivalries of the War Lords and the almost equally bitter conflict of ideologies. The country was a political experiment not a unified nation; it was governed largely by a lot of young hot-heads whose chief qualification seemed to be a conviction that they knew better than their fathers, who seemed bent on the destruction of just those institutions which guaranteed stability. But time and an external influence have wrought essential changes. The turbulent youths of the 1920's are becoming middle-aged and have been chastened by experience. More important—for the revolutionary students were, after all, only a handful among China's millions—has been the influence of Japan.

The original ferment which leavened the inert complacency of China came from the contact of students in Europe and America with Western culture. There they became acquainted with the triumphs of applied science, with highly conscious nationalism, and with the disdain of unthinking Westerners (the majority) for a people who used hand-barrows instead of motor-trucks. These students returned to China resentful both of their country's backwardness and of the foreigners' attitude. So they were resolved to imitate machine-made culture, which was easily done by wearing European clothes, drinking cocktails and dancing to jazz, and more tediously by introducing 'science' wherever they could. On the other hand they too had become consciously patriotic and expressed this in anti-foreign agitation which was focused on the Treaty Ports and Foreign Concessions. To the vast bulk of Chinese, lacking conscious patriotism, these evidences of foreign intrusion were no more degrading than are a few fleas to a dog, while those in contact with the foreigner found the concessions refuges in times of riot and sources of profitable trade. Had there been no external influence to turn the scales, it is quite possible that the inertia of 400 million conservatives would have been too much for the riotous students. But there was Japan. Had the Japanese been patient, had they fallen in with the China-for-the-Chinese propaganda and disclaimed any ambition conflicting

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with Chinese interests, they might have infiltrated the country until it was completely in their hands economically. But they were in a hurry. They grabbed Manchuria, they threatened North China, they made a bid to capture Shanghai. The young revolutionaries picked on Japan as the chief foreign aggressor and then the Japanese began to demonstrate to the Chinese as a whole that the young firebrands were right. Ancient families have long memories: they know that the oppressor is an upstart who falls as quickly as he has risen and that, if one is patient, the tyranny will pass; non-resistance is the best answer to the tyrant. But here was a new problem, not a local or a temporary threat but a universal one. Not one clan was menaced but the very social system which made the clan organization a possibility. What was unconsciously present as a unanimity of belief in a way of living was made into a conscious nationalism by the brutal aggression of a foreign power.

The Chinese social system has so subordinated individual interests to an everlasting group that loyalty is second nature. Inured to calamity, bred to the belief that any catastrophe is temporary and identified by service with his ancestors, contemporaries and descendants, and united in his devotion with four hundred million comrades, the individual Chinese will struggle so long as breath is left to him. In defence they are sure to maintain the magnificent morale they have so far exhibited. On the other hand, not being a warlike people, their nature would have to change profoundly before they would have much heart for a war beyond their borders.

When we turn to the case of Russia we find at once analogies but also great differences. There is the same wide dispersal of a people 'so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable'. There is the same oriental disregard of life and familiarity with misery. For these reasons we should expect the Russians to be undismayed by threats of invasion and unshaken by its success. But what ancient tradition, what way of life, would they be defending? What is the historic Russian national

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ideal? If there is one at all, it is difficult to discern. There is no common language, no common religion, and what consistency in form of government can now be seen is only a few years old. In fact what seems at one time or another to have been the basis of unity has given way to another. So kaleidoscopic has the history of Russia been that prediction as to its future is fantastically guess-work. If we regard the culture of Western Europe as adult and that of America as adolescent, then we should have to say that Russian culture is in its infancy, lusty though the infant be. Russia is anomalous in another respect. European civilization has evolved slowly, little influenced from without. The Americans and the Dominions of the British Empire have developed from the traditions of Europe carried overseas by immigrants who displaced completely the savage cultures in the lands they penetrated. But the Russian Empire is a true melting pot of East and West, each has absorbed the other, while the elements in Russian evolution that are derived from Western Europe represent not so much the gift or imposition of immigrants or conquerors as borrowings by a state that has resented foreign intrusion. Few people realize how new a country Russia is. Of course if the age of a nation is to be reckoned from the period when its existing political institutions were established, Russia is not even twenty-five years old, because it was some years after the 1917 revolution that something like its present form of government was evolved. But we must presume that 'country' refers to something in the nature of a people and that it is not just a geographical term. What unifying principle, or principles, can be detected in Russian history, elements carried over from the Tsarist régime and thus providing such a continuity as would fortify morale?

The cradle of Russia was in the wooded plains lying between and around the Dnieper and the Don, particularly in their upper reaches. Here roamed and fought tribes from the Baltic, Turks from the South and Mongol peoples from the East. Northmen attained an uneasy supremacy about the period when legend was turning into history.

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At the end of the tenth century they espoused Christianity in its 'Orthodox' form and at the end of the fifteenth century the state identified itself with the support of this faith, since Constantinople had ceased to be the central home of the Eastern Church. The situation had its analogy in the identity throughout centuries of the Caliphate with the Ottoman Sultanate. This religious factor was important in the crystallizing out of a homogeneous political group from among the kaleidoscopically changing domination of one or another nomadic tribe in this region. But, since the incorporation of huge areas of Asia into the later Russian Empire was not accompanied by conversion of the new 'Russians' to a Russian religion, and since religion has been discountenanced by the Soviet, this factor can hardly be invoked now as tradition important for the unity and morale of contemporary Russia.

Although a common faith was operating from the end of the fifteenth century to give the Russians a consciousness of being a people set apart, there were so many changes of rule until 1613 that there was little chance of a political consciousness developing. Then, however, the Romanovs came into power and with their autocracy established and maintained a consistency of government that endured until the Revolution of 1917. Like China and Japan, and perhaps because of their being largely Asiatic, the Russians have always been isolationists. In consequence of this exclusive policy their material culture lagged behind that of Western Europe, in fact they had as much or more an Asiatic civilization than a European one. Contact with Europe began, however, to exert an influence in the latter half of the seventeenth century and Peter the Great's victories and his removal of the capital to St Petersburg in 1703 made Russia part of Europe. A regularized system of government, a 'constitution', appeared only under Catherine the Great (1775). Provision was then made for the first time for local government both on its administrative and judicial sides, power being vested in the hands of the local nobility under the overriding authority of the central autocracy. In

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a sense, therefore, modern Russia dates from this period. Although Russia-in-Europe was a smaller country than the territory now thus designated, it was made into a country with both a characteristic religion and a characteristic political system, the latter being capable of application to further territories. That Russia had a life of 142 years, from 1775 to 1917. Since its form of government was superseded in the Revolution, it can hardly be regarded as providing an ancient tradition, such as could support morale.

Community of language is even more unsuitable as a factor in morale. The U.S.S.R. contains (according to the Russian Academy of Sciences) 169 ethnic groups divided into ten major divisions. Diversity of language is almost as great. True it is that three-quarters of the population speak Slavonic tongues, but only just over half speak the 'Great Russian' tongue. And even this, as a literary language, is astonishingly new, dating only from the latter part of the eighteenth century. Prior to this time there was an oral literature, but written speech was the Greek of the learned ecclesiastics (analogous to the use of Latin in the Middle Ages in Western Europe). Then—an indication of growth of a national feeling—came a group of writers who amalgamated Greek with the vernacular as well as borrowing words from Western Europe. This process was roughly analogous to the fusion of Anglo-Saxon with French and Latin to form the English tongue more than four centuries earlier.

And what of imperialistic tradition? How old is it? This is a difficult question to answer. While Spaniards, Frenchmen and Englishmen were seeking adventure, trade, conversion of heathen or relief from oppression at home in excursions overseas, the Russians were pushing tentacles out towards the East. By the middle of the seventeenth century some adventurers had penetrated to the mouth of the Amur. Russian settlers and a few forts were strung across Northern Siberia, but it was only in the middle of the nineteenth century that the land was formally occupied. The Empire, then, is of recent date. Centralized government held it together, of course,



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but what sentiment was there, prior to the Revolution, to hold it together? Only loyalty to the supreme autocrat, the Tsar. The myth of the 'little father' was, throughout the nineteenth century, vigorously propagated by church and state officials. The peasants were largely illiterate and necessarily ignorant. So it was not difficult to represent to them that it was the Tsar's soldiers who protected them from Turk or Mongol and that, no matter what might be the tyranny of the local landowners or potentates, the distant and God-like Tsar was a kindly father thinking tenderly of the welfare of his humble children: Russia was one family. This was probably a strong motif in Russian imperial morale and, very likely, it still survives, having been transferred first to Lenin and then to Stalin. Another bit of propaganda—panslavism—may have been an important factor in government circles under the old régime, but it is unlikely to have much influence in the U.S.S.R., too many of whose millions are not Slavs, merely 'comrades' in the Soviets.

So far, then, apart from the possible exception of the 'one family' idea, there seems to be no tradition that can have survived the Revolution. But this is to forget that that upheaval had its roots, and here is a tradition at least as old as Russia in Europe as a regularized political unit and much older than the totality of pre-revolutionary Russia. The idea of political liberty is a luxury developing among people who are not living at a bare subsistence level. Russia has always been a backward country so far as material culture goes, which means that the vast majority of its people have enjoyed a low standard of comfort. Intellectuals from the end of the seventeenth century may have resented autocracy, but the intellectuals have been largely killed off. What counts to-day is the traditional aspiration of the peasant. People who are hovering on the edge of starvation resent having the fruits of their labour wrung from them to enrich employers and landlords whose idleness, luxury and profligacy they can witness for themselves. A distant autocratic ruler can be accepted as part of the inscrutable and unchangeable ordering of nature which

is itself governed by an omnipotent God. But to see the fruits of one's labour squandered while one starves is not to be endured. Consequently the victims of such oppression cast their longings for reform in economic terms. The serf who belonged to the soil yearned to have the soil belong to him. The 'Reforms' of Catherine the Great gave more power to the landlords and increased agrarian disquiet. As early as 1773 there was a peasant revolt. Although its success was local and temporary, the bitterness which fomented it survived. The liberation of the serfs in 1861 served actually to accentuate it. To compensate landowners for the land transferred to the peasants they were paid by bonds the interest on which had to be paid by the latter, who could actually own this land (often too small a parcel to support a family) only by retirement of the bonds. It has been said that the peasants ceased to be slaves of the landowners only to become 'serfs of the state'. Many of them migrated to the towns, where their sweated labour was exploited in Russia's belated industrial revolution. Economic frustration pursued them. Little wonder that the masses seethed, that anarchism, nihilism, socialism and terrorism flourished in spite of the efficiency of the secret police. To own not merely land but all sources of production became the ambition, the ideal of the masses. The Revolution was as inevitable as its basis was traditional.

We strive to attain our ambitions, but when a goal is attained we rest unless and until we erect some other ideal. Had the Russian people attained the fruits as well as title of ownership, the urge to concerted action might by now have been dissipated, or there might be disillusionment had immediate prosperity been promised them. But it was here that Lenin's psychological intuition came into play. The proletariat were told that it was not enough to dispossess the Tsar, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie; the assets of the country would have to be more efficiently exploited, agriculture and industry would have to be mechanized on most modern principles. These changes could not be made overnight, not even perhaps in one

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generation. So the people must be patient, must work for their children and their children's children, expecting nothing for themselves but the satisfaction of knowing they were building a brave new world. Material gain is a poor basis for a permanent ideal, but to those who live on the edge of starvation security is the most natural of aspirations and, indeed, may be an exclusive one. The Russians have seen the arrival of (to them) magical tractors and aeroplanes, they have witnessed the miracles of modern engineering, a new earth is visible and a new Heaven can be descried just beyond the horizon. Material blessings that have to them an almost spiritual value are now the object of an enemy's attack; worse than that, this enemy is fighting with the avowed policy of enslaving whom he conquers. Hate of the oppressor is no new phenomenon in Russia. Thus the Soviets can call on loyalty to a group that lives through many generations as well as one composed of inexhaustible millions.

The logic of emotions is *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, as we have seen, and this seems to hold for societies as well as individuals. During a war history is searched for precedents. Attention is turned to past victories snatched from apparent defeat, to past heroism and to past heroics, the last not merely as examples, for their spirits may be invoked to join in the battle, usually metaphorically but sometimes literally. It would be interesting to know what effect this tendency is now having on the Russian outlook. The only unifying factor with a truly long history is religion and it has already been reported that state disapprobation of the church has changed to tolerance. Folk beliefs die hard and may exhibit themselves in strange ways. A peculiarity of Russian hagiology was that the body of a true saint never knew corruption; so to the Russians there was nothing grotesque in having Lenin's body embalmed and exposed to the view of millions of pilgrims. They have, of course, extolled the memories of revolutionary martyrs, and they have made a film about a general who rose from the ranks in Tsarist days. But will they, in search for heroic precedent, revert to the victories of the Tsars and the prowess of

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warrior aristocrats? My guess is that they will. The more nationalism grows the more will the Revolution become an incident in the life of a people whose age will thereby be greatly extended.

Germany and Italy are countries of recent origin in their present political forms and both have relatively small areas. Each is aware of these limitations and has striven with some measure of success to compensate for the deficiencies by propaganda. Let us consider the case of Germany first.

In one sense the country is as young as the Third Reich, but it can legitimately claim an older tradition than that. There is a clear continuity between Hitler, Bismarck and Frederick the Great, a continuity visible to the outsider and claimed by Nazi ideology. This, however, is the tradition of Prussia, not of all the German states until they had, imperfectly, been brought under the sway of Prussia late in the nineteenth century. Because *Mein Kampf* was an autobiography and a discussion of the problems and programme of the Party as well as propaganda for all Germans, there are in it many, and surprising, admissions of German weaknesses. One of these is of the lack of moral resistiveness that belongs to a young country. On p. 527 we read:

...only three phenomena have emerged which we must consider as lasting fruits of political happenings definitely determined by our foreign policy.

(1) The colonization of the Eastern Mark, which was mostly the work of the Bauvari.

(2) The organization of the Brandenburg-Prussian State, which was the work of the Hohenzollerns and which became the model for the crystallization of a new Reich....

The third great success achieved by our political activity was the establishment of the Prussian State and the development of a particular State concept which grew out of this. To the same source we are to attribute the organization of the instinct of national self-preservation and self-defence in the German Army, an achievement which suited the modern world. The transformation of the idea of self-defence on the part of the individual into the duty of national defence is derived from the Prussian State and the *new*<sup>1</sup> statal concept which it introduced. It would be impossible to over-estimate

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

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the importance of this historical process. Disrupted by excessive individualism, the German nation became disciplined under the organization of the Prussian Army and in this way recovered at least some of the capacity to form a national community, which in the case of other peoples had originally arisen through the constructive urge of the herd instinct.

If the 'constructive urge of the herd instinct' produces natural and spontaneous national unity—which does not seem to be a distortion of Hitler's meaning—then he is saying that modern Germany is an artificial creation and that it dates from Prussian hegemony. But Hitler goes further than this, he even admits that this recency in tradition implies a weakness in defensive morale. On p. 547 he says:

French war aims would have been obtained through the world war if, as was originally hoped in Paris, the struggle had been carried out on German soil. Let us imagine the bloody battles of the world war not as having taken place on the Somme, in Flanders, in Artois, in front of Warsaw, Nizhni-Novgorod, Kovno, and Riga but in Germany, in the Ruhr or on the Main, on the Elbe, in front of Hanover, Leipzig, Nurnberg, etc. If such happened, then we must admit that the destruction of Germany might have been accomplished. It is very much open to question if our young federal State could have borne the hard struggle for four and a half years, as it was borne by a France that had been centralized for centuries, with the whole national imagination focused on Paris... I am fully convinced that if things had taken a different course there would no longer be a German Reich to-day but only 'German States'.

Closely related to age of tradition in promotion of morale in a nation is the area it inhabits. The connection was by no means hidden from Hitler, as the following quotations shew (pp. 524, 525, 526):

Looked at from the purely territorial point of view, the area comprised in the German Reich is insignificant in comparison with the other States that are called 'World Powers'...

We must always face this bitter truth with clear and calm minds. We must study the area and population of the German Reich in relation to the other States and compare them down through the centuries. We shall then find that, as I have said, Germany is not a World Power whether its military strength be great or not...

... Without respect for 'tradition' and without any preconceived notions, the Movement must find the courage to organize our national forces and set them on the path which will lead them away from that territorial restriction which is the bane of our national life to-day, and win a new territory for them.

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The German people as a whole, lacking the right beliefs and having the wrong ones, needed education to furnish them with a spirit to match Prussian arms. All who have read *Thus Spake Germany* will have had a surfeit of evidence to shew that propaganda to this end began long before the Nazis undertook to rewrite history and anthropology. The contemporary versions of the tale are merely exaggerations and trumpetings of what went before. We are all familiar with the theme and its argument. Western civilization is Aryan; Aryan equals Nordic and the Germans are the great Nordic power; the history of European achievement is German history and wherever there are Germans there is, morally, a bit of Germany and soon it will be German in actuality. (Ancillary to this is the 'biological' argument that the Nordics, i.e. Germans, are a superior people, so, by the law of the survival of the fittest, the Third Reich, which has purified its blood, has a biological right to any part of the world it wants. Biological laws are inexorable. Q.E.D.)

To us this is grotesque; but we must remember that when we deal psychologically with beliefs we are not concerned with their objective validity but with the genuineness of the faith. We have no reason to suppose that there is any mystic power in tradition to keep it alive when there are none transmitting it. False history thoroughly inculcated and undisputed can manufacture a tradition. Given a complete censorship excluding countervailing information from abroad and suppressing it domestically for one complete generation, false history would become accepted tradition. The difficulty is to make the censorship complete. Parents or grandparents will talk and citizens will travel abroad or offer hospitality to foreigners unimpressed by the censorship. The process must therefore be gradual and to keep pushing the same doctrines consistently for a series of generations demands a continuity of policy by authority that is difficult to maintain. In Germany propaganda in favour of the theory that Germans are responsible for all main cultural advances has been going on for more than fifty years. There would now be few Germans

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who would dream of criticizing Hitler's statement: 'For centuries Russia owed the source of its livelihood as a State to the Germanic nucleus of its governing classes.' (He forgot, or was ignorant of, Bismarck's theory that Prussians were superior to other Germans because they were half Slav.) To Germans to-day it is a fact that the first telegraphs, telephones and wireless sets were invented in Germany and there is nothing grotesque in the claim that Shakespeare's plays are German classics. But to amalgamate this conviction of cultural superiority with an acceptance of Prussian domination and a tradition of military invincibility is beyond the power of Goebbels and his team. In Bavarian rural communities at least as late as the summer of 1939 the Prussians were regarded as foreign intruders. So long as Prussianism promises the rewards of conquest, its domination will be acceptable, but it remains as a scapegoat on which blame for German misery can be put, when those promises become a mockery. And propaganda has set itself an impossible task when it tries to marry the idea of German invincibility with tradition. The memory of defeat is too recent and too bitter to be denied. In fact *Mein Kampf* is concerned largely with an attempt to explain it away as due to inherent weaknesses in the Kaiser's Reich that were to be swept away by National Socialism. In other words victory could be secured only by making a break with tradition. Again, the religion of blood and soil might provide an invigorating inspiration if its worship were pure. But Hitler compromised this faith when he trafficked with Stalin in 1939 and now German allies are Finns, Hungarians and Rumanians—the latter two being previously marked down for slavery as being inferior peoples. Of course such alliances can be defended on grounds of expediency but they put a strain on faith in the war as a crusade. Worst of all is the league with the despised Italians and the hated Japanese. Was not the 'yellow peril' a German discovery and one of the most important factors in construction of the Aryan-Nordic-German myth?

There is thus little ground for expecting the German in days of

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trial to rely on his brotherhood with widespread millions of fellow believers or on his mystical union with myriads of comrades now in Valhalla. Such support for morale is not to be created by propaganda, which at best can only build an image of the desired reality. A god can answer prayers, an idol cannot. The weakness Hitler recognized as inherent in the youth of any state is still there and cannot be exorcised. But youth has its virtues. If fortitude rested solely on tradition, history would be unable to record the rise of new nations, of new powers. Nazi theory has introduced an inconsistency into its ideology and one that may become glaring. It would have done better to stress the virility of youth exclusively. But that would have been difficult. When the majority of peoples in a confederation are of a bourgeois mentality and are dominated by one warlike section, they are bound to have a latent feeling of inferiority. This inferiority leads inevitably to compensations one of which is a claim for a kind of historical greatness that is palpably unjustified.

We may, perhaps, hazard the guess that the Nazis have put new wine into old wine-skins. Such a statement is, however, fully justified in discussing Fascist propaganda. Indeed Italy gives a signal proof of the futility of an attempt to fabricate by artificial means the kind of morale that normally is of gradual growth through a series of generations. 'From the fall of the Roman Empire till modern times the Italians have had no political unity, no independence, no organized existence as a nation. Their history is not the history of a united people, centralizing and absorbing its constituent elements by a process of continued evolution, but of a group of cognate populations, exemplifying various types of constitutional development.'<sup>1</sup> The present Italy was the work of Cavour's diplomacy, Garibaldi's fire and Victor Emmanuel II's common sense. The fighting involved was hardly such as to write a glorious page in Italian history. First there were the battles of Magenta and Solferino in 1859. In the former all the fighting was done by the French. In

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th edition.



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the latter the Italian part of the allied forces was first defeated and then advanced only against the Austrian rear-guard which was forced to withdraw for tactical reasons. Lombardy was thus added to the Sardinias. Next Garibaldi's filibusters assisted the revolutionaries in the Two Sicilies to dislodge their Bourbon rulers. Fighting only against Italian troops, he won a series of victories. Modern Italy was completed when Austria in 1866 was forced to cede Venetia. This was a peculiarly inglorious victory because the Italians were defeated by the Austrians but the latter received such a drubbing from the Italians' ally Prussia that they were forced to withdraw from the territory they had successfully defended. This left only Rome outside the confederation. Garibaldi and other Italian patriots attempted in vain to take it—so long as the French assisted in its defence; but when the French garrison was withdrawn, during the Franco-Prussian War, the Italian troops walked in. The foundations of the Empire were not laid without fighting but none of it was glorious; even the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-12 was rather a desultory affair in which no well-armed and disciplined forces were encountered. During the Great War, when they were alone the Italians were terribly beaten although later fighting well in company with French and British support. This contrast has been repeated during the present war, in which the Italians have always crumpled when by themselves but have acquitted themselves more creditably when shoulder to shoulder with the Germans. In their greatest unaided struggle—against the Abyssinians—they apparently were able to conquer only with the use of gas against an army and a population totally unprotected against that weapon.

This is a strange history. Many individual Italians are courageous, even intrepid, as their prowess in motor and air racing shews. Even in the mass they can be brave, provided they have warlike allies at their side. It would seem that they lack confidence in themselves and, if the present analysis of national morale is sound, the reason is not far to seek. Italy is a small country, whose people have known

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tyranny for centuries but never freedom. To them the word 'Italian' has meant a common language, a common culture, perhaps, but not one that was peculiarly national, while of military tradition there has not been a trace. (The innumerable wars between the various states were fought chiefly by mercenaries and not by a citizen soldiery.) What is of chief psychological interest here is the completeness of the failure of the Fascists to inculcate morale by propaganda and regimentation. Italians are individualists and have a degree of individual resourcefulness, imagination and originality that is perhaps to be correlated with their lack of national cohesiveness, since the latter tends inevitably towards conventionalization of thinking. Such a people could hardly be expected to give anything like spontaneous support to a totalitarian state organization; they would turn more naturally to a democratic form of government. Their acquiescence in Fascist domination would therefore indicate a lack of group support for their natural democratic ideal; in other words they lack such a patriotism as engenders the fighting spirit. If cowardice has made Fascism possible, subservience to its dictates ought to have confirmed that cowardice and actually to have prevented the development of true patriotism. This is, perhaps, the reason why the fighting qualities of the Italians seem to be even poorer in this war than they were in the last.

Like his ally Hitler, Mussolini seems to have sensed the importance for morale of a tradition of military greatness and of wide dispersal of territory. Lacking either in actuality, Mussolini has borrowed both. Proceeding from the indubitable fact that modern Italy houses the ruins of the ancient city of Rome, he has announced that the ancient Roman Empire is the natural heritage of modern Italians—all they have to do is to go out and take it. Probably there is as much Roman blood in Italy as there is anywhere, although even there it must be well diluted by now. But what Mussolini has forgotten, wilfully neglects, or never has realized, is that it is continuity of tradition and not blood that counts. Only a people who are com-

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pletely docile intellectually could have such a tradition foisted on them. The most frenzied oratory cannot make the Italian feel the milk of a wolf-mother warm in his throat. King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, accepted by the British people as a myth, exert more influence on British morale than the 'history' of Romulus and Remus on that of the Italians.

Finally, to exemplify the operation of the factors of space and time, we may consider their operation in fortifying the spirit of the peoples of the British Empire.

History records no empire that has ever been so widely dispersed over the surface of the globe or contained so many subjects as that ruled by King George the Sixth. As has been explained, a national group includes all those who have adopted and made their own the traditions peculiar to the people. These may include elements borrowed, or inherited, by other nations. If such elements constitute an ideal that is believed to be threatened, a whole group of nations may—temporarily—be welded together in the struggle for maintenance of that ideal. This is particularly true of the bond uniting the Empire with the United States. The cultures of Britain and America are different, more different than is often supposed, but the British system of parliamentary government coupled with an insistence on individual liberty has been amalgamated with Americanism through the magic of the phrase 'Anglo-Saxon traditions'. Consequently, when the Empire is threatened by powers upholding contrary ideals, there is a relentless tendency in the States for sympathy to grow until it is expressed in actual military co-operation. This sympathy is expected in Britain and contributes its quota to morale. We feel not only that we are fighting for the world but that, backed by our cousins, we make up the major part of the world, something much too big ever to be defeated. One of the strategic landmarks of this war was the 'Dunkirk' speech of the Prime Minister on June 4th and one passage in it, which will probably go down in history as a classic, is so direct an invocation of the principle I have been trying

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to describe in clumsy psychological exposition that it may well take the place of any further adumbration of this theme.

We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans. We shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, no matter what the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until in God's good time the new world, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

There is probably no country belonging to the Western civilizations that is so conscious of its long history as is Britain. This does not mean that its people are historically minded in the academic sense: far from it. Many are ignorant of what centuries saw the Armada and Trafalgar, of the name of the king when Waterloo was fought, and to many the statement that King Alfred fought at Agincourt might occasion no surprise. But every proper Englishman knows that for countless centuries Englishmen have fought against superior odds in defence of 'liberty' and have always won resounding victories in the end, victories as important for the world as for the victors. There are no storied campaigns of aggression; the Empire has, somehow, just happened, perhaps as a reward from a discerning Providence for the defence of liberty, perhaps it has been given by the same Providence to the only people in the world who are capable of ruling 'natives' to their benefit. This is, of course, not history at all but merely tradition; it is, however, a tradition that is regarded as history, i.e. as a record of facts. The record extends back for so many centuries that it represents one aspect of the general ordering of the universe, and that the British should cease to be a chosen people is a fantastical notion that no practical, commonsense person would bother his head about.

It is some such myth that gives unconscious backing to British morale, and why not? The proof of the pudding is the eating, which

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is a most unscientific statement but is the essence of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* logic which governs emotions. For countless centuries foreigners have been as maddened by this arrogance as the believers have been fortified by it. It has never been disproved and, indeed, it does prove something—that there is a stubborn, conservative vitality in the British ethos which has given this country its unique position in the world to-day. It is the only great power that has maintained throughout many centuries a consistency in its political constitution and social institutions. Evolution has been constant but revolution absent with the exception of the highly temporary Commonwealth in the seventeenth century. At no time has it been possible to say that the country was essentially different from what it had been a year or ten years before. Is there any other land in which the citizen, in time of crisis, can open his history book, read of what happened centuries before and exclaim, 'But this might have been written of to-day!'

Since precedent has never let the people down they turn to it automatically when in trouble. The politician cites parallels while the daily press prints racy anecdotes. Against the numbers, the armament and the technical proficiency of the enemy we pit the Armada and Waterloo. The folk-lore of Drake's Drum is half-believed consciously, while unconsciously, symbolically, it is accepted. When, as during the last war, Nelson is portrayed in a recruiting poster as now asking Englishmen to do their duty, there is no awareness of absurdity. It is all an appeal to the immortality theme. The heroes of the past are not dead, they fight for us and we fight for them; if we die in this conflict we attain to deathless glory. As usual the argument, the claim, is better expressed in poetry because in it there is no attempt at conscious logic which excites criticism and metaphor is accepted as an expression of truths that are moral rather than factual. Thomas Campbell's *Ye Mariners of England* gives, indeed, a sufficiently close summary of the immortality theme to justify quotations from it:

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Ye Mariners of England  
That guard our native seas,  
Whose flag has braved a thousand years  
The battle and the breeze!  
Your glorious standard raise again  
To match another foe, . . .

. . . . .

The spirit of your fathers  
Shall start from every wave!—  
For the deck it was their field of fame,  
And Ocean was their grave:  
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,  
Your manly hearts shall glow, . . .

. . . . .

The meteor flag of England  
Shall yet terrific burn,  
Till danger's troubled night depart  
And the star of peace return.  
Then, then, ye ocean warriors!  
Our song and feast shall flow  
To the fame of your name,  
When the storm has ceased to blow;  
When the fiery fight is heard no more,  
And the storm has ceased to blow.

## CHAPTER 6

### NATIONAL SCALES OF VALUE

I HAVE previously said that there is no one morale, but that each country has its own type, with aspects in which it is strong and points at which it may be peculiarly vulnerable. This is like the statement, to which there would be universal agreement, that individuals vary in the objectives they strive to attain or for which they are prepared to suffer. Indeed if there were not this analogy, the psychologist would have no clue to follow in his search for the criteria he might use in discriminating between the morales of different nations.

Most personal misunderstandings and most international conflicts arise because everyone seems to insist on others thinking as he does. The most pernicious of all popular psychological *clichés* is 'Human nature is pretty much the same everywhere'. If it were true there would be fewer divorces and fewer major wars.<sup>1</sup> The latter half of that statement may seem extravagant, but a moment's reflection will shew its justification so far as the present war is concerned. We stubbornly refused to believe that the Germans were committed to a second world-conquering programme: they were people like ourselves. The Germans, on the other hand, thought we were degenerate in our complaisance while they prepared for war because, had we their nature and their *Weltanschauung*, such sloth would mean degeneracy. So, believing that we would be supine for ever or cower under the first blow, they committed themselves with confidence to another world war.

The psychological background to the last war was similar, although, perhaps, not quite so obvious. The sacrifices inevitable in the amassing

<sup>1</sup> By 'major war' I do not refer to wars, no matter how protracted, waged between rival princes with mercenary armies of no nationality but to wars involving the co-operative effort of whole nations.

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of the huge armaments which make great wars possible are such that no nation would submit to them unless fired by an ambition for reaching an objective attainable only through a major war. Such armament is never accumulated in secret; it cannot be except in a country as isolated from visitors as Russia has succeeded in making herself. If there were an adequate realization of the opponent's ambition before the armament was complete one would strike at the potential enemy first and a small preventive war would be fought. But before 1914 those in Britain who attempted to arouse their countrymen to a sense of their peril were dubbed warmongers, even as they were in the interval between the two wars. Was not the *Berliner* who loved his Bach a civilized person, could Huns inhabit Oberammergau, did not the *Münchener* family on its Sunday picnic in the country present a perfect picture of contented domesticity? They were no more cut-throats than we were.

How might we avoid errors like this? How can we escape from the fallacy that human nature is the same everywhere? The answer is to be found in a study of the *scale of values* of the individual, if the problem be personal, or of the community, if the predictable response is to be made by a social group. 'Value' refers to the preference of the subject for one kind of activity rather than another, or, more accurately, for one kind of interest as against others. Every interest has, of course, its conscious aspect, for it is expressed in a group or train of actions that are voluntarily directed. But why perform these rather than other deeds? The answer that the average person would give to this question is that he likes this activity better than another. Now this is either pure tautology or it means that the subject anticipates pleasure from one rather than from another pursuit, which is just untrue. Who would not rather play golf or go to the *matinée* than attend to his duties at the office? The deliberate and specific choices we make are rarely determined by a prevision of pleasure. A man goes to his office because he has to, the compulsion is that of having to earn his living, he will tell you, or because he has promised to do



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so; perhaps he has merely promised himself, you may discover, and is fearful of being lazy. The further one's enquiries go into the problem of motivation for habitual programmes of behaviour the less satisfactory does the naïve hedonistic explanation become. Psychoanalysis, committed to a hedonistic theory, invents an unconscious wish that is gratified symbolically in the interest, which is then called a sublimation.

These terms bristle with terminological implications that cannot be discussed here, but we may safely agree, at least, that the motivation of interests must be unconscious, simply because something must be impelling them, and the subject is manifestly unable to give either himself or others an adequate explanation of his conduct. The life of an animal is, fundamentally, governed by instincts and appetites, and habits built up in connection therewith. In marked contrast the separate actions of man are always under direct conscious control, but the general programme of his life is guided by his interests (derived probably from instincts and appetites), that drive him or lure him involuntarily on this or that quest.

All the people in one community, born with the same innate drives and subject to similar social pressure, have similar interests but their relative importance varies enormously, and that is what 'value' means. One man is driven, enslaved, by his zeal for science, another for art, or craftsmanship, money-making, religion, devotion to his wife and family, and so on. The only explanation for his single-minded passion that even approximates satisfactoriness is one derived from psychological analysis. The subject himself cannot account for his apparent preferences. He may even deny doing what, objectively, he seems to have chosen as being the most desirable. In fact his scale of values is something that can be drawn up only on the basis of detailed scrutiny of his life history. Such study shews certain consistencies that are characteristic of the personality in question, consistencies that betray his scale of values. If this is known, it may be possible to predict what a man's behaviour will be in various test

## EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

situations. This is a kind of investigation and reasoning that is vitally important in studying national morales, because it seems that national communities have their scales of value just as have individuals and they may be used for valid predictions. In either case the material to study is not what the person and the people say or think of themselves, but history, history of the individual or history of the state. A nation, like a man, has its personality and personality is a peculiar and specific scale of values.

How may these values be detected? Whether it be an individual or a people that is studied, there are five situations or types of phenomena that are evidential.

The first of these is liability to *emotional reaction* in connection with events that are significant for the success of a dominant interest. Elation, anxiety or depression will occur when something happens that offers an opportunity for the expansion of the interest, that threatens its maintenance, or forces its abandonment. On the other hand, similar events relevant to interests low in the scale of values are responded to apathetically. Let us consider an individual and a national example.

Day in and day out a man plods unemotionally through the routine detail of his business, but when an opportunity occurs that promises its expansion (and probably an increase in his routine labour) he is excited and elated. If, on the other hand, there is a threat to profitable trading, even though it be in some quite subsidiary line, he worries in an anxiety that would be justified by a threat to his livelihood. Or, if he loses his occupation either through discharge or voluntary retirement, he may become depressed. We are all familiar with the case of the man who has been looking forward to the leisure of retirement which he will devote to his garden or beetle collection or what not. So soon as the leisure is available, he grows listless and the hobby is neglected. I have been told that working men who are eager frequenters of public libraries may shun them when unemployed. They sit round dully, waiting for something to

turn up. An excellent example of the potentiality of a national interest to excite emotion is given by the devotion of the people of the Empire to the Crown. Day by day we feel little about it, but consider the gamut of emotions stirred by the Jubilee, the death of King George the Fifth, the abdication crisis and the Coronation. To describe them would be merely a literary exercise because the psychological significance of the series is obvious. The Crown does matter to the people of the Empire.

Paralleling emotional response is the second criterion, namely the power of a dominant interest to *promote activity*. When novelty has worn off the prosecution of a subsidiary interest is at first fitful and then ceases. So much does personality consist of a stable scale of values that a man who fails to follow one or a few programmes with tenacity is held to be weak-willed or shiftless. That the scale of values of an individual may be deduced from the amount of time and energy he expends in various interests would seem to be too obvious to deserve more than mention. But what of nations? A ready measure of the amount of labour expended on one or another kind of endeavour is the amount of public money spent on it. This changes, naturally, with national emergencies. The urgency of the struggle for survival demands a preponderance of expenditure on military objects. Temporarily, at least, national survival tops the scale of values. But this would be true of any nation and hence is uninformative as to national peculiarity.

Where taxes go in times of peace, however, does provide evidence. Does the nation spend its money on social services, education, national support of trade developments, cultural and sporting facilities, armaments, or what? The people's awareness of the state as such may be reflected in the amount of taxes they may be prepared to pay, or in the smallness of the demands they may make on it. In 1931, when a national financial emergency was declared, many of those with money queued up to pay taxes, while villages where the majority of the population were on the dole voted for its reduction.

## VALUE: DIRECTION OF LOYALTY

Here was writing on the wall to be read by any potential enemy of Britain. To the German, however, patriotism was best expressed in armaments. He skimped and saved and sweated to make more and more guns and aeroplanes. That, too, was a writing on the wall, but to our eyes it was hieroglyphics.

Thirdly, we find correlated inevitably with emotion and type of activity as evidence of value a *choice of fealty* when there is a conflict of loyalties. Only in Sunday school books or in Hollywood films are there presented moral problems that can be settled by reference to universally recognized canons. It is easy enough to see which way one's duty lies when it is a choice between champagne at dinner or the customary annual contribution to a local hospital. But when there is a choice between the comfort and health of tenants and the education of one's children, then what? The decision reached in the latter type of quandary gives unequivocal evidence as to the scale of values, which is all the more striking because the same words may be used to justify opposite decisions. The man who squeezes his tenants to educate his son does it for the sake of his family. The man who sacrifices his son's education acts on the latter's behalf in upholding the honour of the family. The two decisions reflect different family ideals. We all of us owe allegiance to many different groups and their claims on us vary from day to day as the groups in question have opportunities for expansion or are threatened. If his club is facing a crisis, a man may leave his business for a few days to deal with the club's difficulties. This involves no great conflict. But if the club were to be saved only by his devoting all his time to it, and if he elected to do so, his neighbours would, quite rightly, say he was more interested in his club than in making money.

An excellent example of a significant national choice was given in the spring of 1941. One does not know what the motives or calculations of the Government were when an expeditionary force was sent to Greece, but the popular reaction thereto was observable. I heard no one express a hope of victory but many who predicted failure.

## VALUE: DIRECTION OF LOYALTY

Yet few of these avowed pessimists failed to add: 'But I suppose we've got to do it.' A minority said it was a mistaken policy, that we lost more prestige through defeat than we should gain by demonstration of loyalty to an ally. When I asked any of this group what he would have done had the decision been his to make, there was either an evasion on the ground of insufficient information, or else the statement: 'Oh, I suppose I should have done what the Government did.' It seems that the country did approve of this expensive gesture not as a gamble that might come off, but as something that had to be done disregarding its cost, desperate though our need was of men and materials.

If a small country is attacked by our enemy, it becomes our ally. If we see that it is going to be attacked, and it refuses to let us co-operate in its defence, what ought we to do? Self-interest would urge us to force our assistance on it. But this is to interfere with the independence of another sovereign state. So we have (with the exception of Persia) refrained from taking such action. Russia, however, is not inhibited by this squeamishness. In its earlier years, when communism was for the whole world, the Bolshevik régime made no bones about its efforts to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. When, under Stalin, the swing was towards nationalism, self-preservation justified invasions of the small Baltic states, Finland and part of Poland. It is not for us to say whether actions of this sort are 'right' or 'wrong', but they are not such as would be tolerated by us, if our government proposed them. But to a government that, in the national interest, will 'liquidate' large groups of its own people, no 'morals' stand in the way of expedience. Sensitiveness to the claims of minorities and to the rights of small nations is all one.

The fourth indication of the scale of values is in its influence on *moral outlook*. We admire endeavour towards the goals that we value, recording such conduct as virtuous; we deplore behaviour that interferes with such quests and regard it as vicious. Closely linked with conflicts of loyalty is a moral scale, a scale hinted at in phrases like

## VALUE: MORAL STANDARDS

'the higher morality', 'a lesser evil' or 'charity covers a multitude of sins'. Changes in moral values from age to age or clime to clime reflect the social scale of values directly. The nature of a man or of a community may be judged from what is admired, condoned, or considered to be shocking. If an author does shoddy work in order to make money with which to discharge a debt, there will be some who regard him as dishonourable because he has been untrue to the standards of his art, while others will regard him as a model of honesty. Thus the values that matter most for the critics are revealed in their judgments.

Is Robin Hood to be praised as a philanthropist or deplored as a thief? In a plutocracy it is virtuous to be rich and wrong to be poor. In the United States, until the great depression, it was a disgrace to be without a job: there was something wrong with an unemployed man, probably he was lazy, or he would not have failed to get another job when he lost his last one. The falsity of this judgment was impressed on the American public during the thirties. Unemployment was widely recognized for the first time as a social as well as an individual problem: accepted values were challenged and a revolution began the ending of which I, for one, would not care to predict. In the old United States (I speak now of the country I knew intimately until twenty years ago) along with the plutocratic standard there went the belief that life was real and life was earnest. The lives of those who did not wish to make any more money, having inherited some, or who had adopted no strenuous profession, were unhappy. They were reprehensible people, they were lonely even if not actively ostracized. Germans worship industry and efficiency with similar, or greater, zeal and both are virtues. In this country, however, efficiency is enviable, just as are good looks or money, but it is not a virtue, or, if it be one, it ranks low in the scale. It is not a moral quality at all. An Englishman who spends his money gracefully, who is considerate, charitable and humorous, may be the most honoured and loved member of his community even though he 'works' at nothing.

## VALUE: MORAL STANDARDS

These variations in moral values from country to country have, incidentally, an immediate bearing on propaganda. It may harden our resolution to accuse Hitler of being dishonourable, but it gives aid and comfort to the Germans to tell them so. Hitler was, apparently, really moved by Chamberlain's accusation of broken faith. He had never been dishonourable because he had broken no promise to the German people. As a series of quotations in *Thus Spake Germany* shew, it is traditional to regard a promise made to a foreigner as a mere move in a diplomatic game. Not to make promises that would fool a rival diplomat is to be derelict in loyalty and, therefore, dishonourable. The Germans, recognizing no moral standard that would conflict with German weal, regard such an accusation against the Führer as, on the one hand, praise for skill in diplomacy and, on the other hand, as an evidence of our preoccupation with trivialities. We babble about 'morals' when we ought to be fighting; we fiddle while Rome burns: we are degenerate.

I have argued that strength of morale will vary with the extension of a group in space. A similar generalization may be made as to the impregnability of a moral judgment. If a small group hold some action to be vicious (or virtuous) and the members of this group are in frequent contact with outsiders holding a contrary view, it will be difficult for the members to maintain the belief that the action in question is fundamentally wrong (or right). If, on the other hand, the number of those imbued by this doctrine is large, and particularly if they are cut off from their neighbours by censorship or the prevention of travel, the development of an unquestioned, purely national, standard of morals is inevitable. It is as likely that Russia would be ethically a law unto herself as that Switzerland would not. If we are to be intellectually honest we ought periodically to re-examine our morals to see whether or not some of our moral judgments that we regard as fundamental may not really be matters of expedience—expedient for Britain, for the Empire, for the English-speaking world. This does not mean that we should therefore abandon such standards,

## VALUE: FEELING OF REALITY

as some short-sighted critics are always urging that we should do. Expediency is not immorality. But if we honestly recognize it as a motive, we should less often justify the taunt of hypocrisy that is inevitably hurled at us by critics who have a different set of moral values from our own.

The last of the fields which may be surveyed for evidence of the scale of values is that of the *feeling of reality* or, to put it in vulgar lay terms, what gets under a man's skin and what doesn't. The psychiatrist, who deals with mental disease, is familiar with 'reality' in two aspects. There is the *sense* of reality that is violated when a patient develops delusions or hallucinations. But, without such loss of judgment, he may complain that his *feeling* of reality is lost. He knows the sun shines as clearly as it used, but sunlight is no longer vivid, nor is grass as green as it used to be, music that was beautiful last month is now only a noise, and so on. His intellect is alive but his emotions are dead, his actions follow a laboured volition, he has no spontaneous lust to do anything, he can no longer love or hate. In a word life has lost its value and so all is unreal, although he can recognize its existence as a phenomenon.

Now all this is just an exaggerated, and therefore instructive, example of a general principle which might be expressed as: things have a reality for us that is proportionate to their value. Happenings feel real when they are tangible, visible, audible, when they stir us emotionally or when they compel us to action. If they are experiences that are not directly sensorial but appeal to us by their meaning, they feel as real as the emotional reaction they excite is urgent. Examples may make this statement intelligible.

If, as has just been argued, the strength of an emotion is a measure of the value attached to the interest involved, then value will determine feelings of reality as well. We may several years ago have read that 10,000 Chinese were butchered by the Japanese army, have murmured, 'How awful', and gone on sipping our breakfast coffee. But if we ran over a dog, that dog, dead or alive and squirming, was



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much more real than the Chinese martyrs. This is not just a question of the directness or second-handedness of the experience. It is not just the remoteness of the poor Chinese. When, at about the same period, a handful of Britons were insulted and threatened in Tientsin, the victims were real. We writhed in our temporary impotence and hoped that the British Raj would have a long memory. We wanted urgently to do something about it, because British prestige was affronted. More recently outrages in Hong Kong and Singapore, still involving many fewer victims than have suffered in China, have been terribly vivid because they have shaken the foundations of *our* empire. Tell a stockbroker that the experiments demonstrating the existence of the neutron were faked, and he doesn't care whether the report is true or false. Tell a physicist that consols dropped 20 points overnight, he says, 'Well, well', and goes on stalking a neutron that no man has ever seen, nor ever will, but that is nevertheless very, very real—to the physicist. Tell a German, even prove to him, that the actions of his government have made his people to stink in the nostrils of the civilized world and you have enunciated a purely academic proposition. The opinions of people who have such ridiculous ethical standards are trivial. Who cares whether a hen admires him or hates him? The judgment of an inferior people destined for slavery is as important as thistle-down in an air-raid. But tell a German that the Royal Air Force considers the Junkers 87B a bad joke and he will either be bitterly incredulous or deeply depressed. That is a foreign opinion that does matter.

In discussing the application of these criteria to the morales of different nations, one is forced into the employment of a religious vocabulary. Man seems to be inveterately religious; he will insist on recognizing the existence of a Higher Power and depending on Him, to paraphrase a well-known definition of religion. The decay of religion, which has been proceeding for several centuries, has been paralleled by a rise of nationalism. Presumably the phenomena are not unconnected, but at any rate the worship of the majority in the

## RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF NATIONALISM

past seems now to be loyalty to the nation, while the morals that were once regulated by the church tend now to be measured against a standard of patriotism. So we can almost say, 'What is the national religion?' instead of, 'What is the nature of its morale?' The Nazis have always recognized that their political theory is a creed, that its essence is spiritual and, as such, can triumph only at the expense of other (technically religious) creeds. Proof for this statement is marshalled in *Thus Spake Germany* and need not be repeated here. What then is this German 'religion'?

There is a subtle but profound difference between the arrogance of the Englishman and that of the German. The latter belongs to a chosen people presided over by a tribal god. The former worships, and is protected by, the one god. The Englishman is amused by the pushfulness of the German, while the German is maddened by the imperturbable superiority of the Englishman. With the skill of a poet, who in symbols expounds moral and spiritual truths that are nonsense when expressed in abstract terms, Winston Churchill explained British morale in his famous 'We will fight them on the beaches' speech, as has already been mentioned. The gist of it was that we fought for, and could rely on, something that was bigger than our petty lives or meagre acres, bigger even than our present Empire, something that extended as far as our gospel had extended. And what have the prophets of Baal to say to that?

It is, I believe, in the exactness of the religious parallel that we may hopefully seek for our understanding of German morale and detect its vulnerability. Since most of us have had no association with any religion but Christianity, we tend to equate religion in general with monotheism. The existence of a number of gods may seem a bit absurd but, as historians and travellers tell us, it was not always thus nor is it so now. We have, anthropologically, to reckon with beliefs that are monotheistic, polytheistic, even daemonological. The latter should be not unexpected in a people whose culture was of a regressive order. The closest parallel to the current German

### THE GERMAN TRIBAL GOD

political theology is that of the ancient Hebrews; in fact the parallel is so close as to make one think it is an unconscious imitation of a religion that is consciously anathema.

The German god is a tribal one, the deity of a chosen people, but there are rival gods. 'Either a German god, or none at all! The internal God of Christendom is a patron of the Treaty of Versailles' (Nickisch, 1929). 'We need a faith that prays to a national god, not an international god of reward and punishment' (Bergmann, 1933). 'I believe in our divinity when millions of Germans are grouped around one Leader. I know God to be in the power of our blood alone' (Profession of Faith of the group *Völkische Aktion*, 1937). The tribal god intervenes (when his people are faithful to him) in their struggles against other peoples. The Prophets of the later Hebrews made it increasingly plain that there was but one God and that He was interested in moral and spiritual values, not in worldly prestige. But faith in the tribal deity persisted, being incorporated in the messianic hope of Jewish nationalism. It may encourage us to remember that even the Disciples lost heart, apparently, when the Master was crucified. They had looked for a Messiah who would establish an earthly kingdom and when their Master was killed their faith died too. They were still worshipping a tribal god, one among other gods, and, if there are others, one's own god cannot be truly omnipotent: his power must be relative.

This is the inherent weakness of German morale. Theirs is a pseudo-religion that recognizes the existence of other nations and other gods. Many references in Nazi literature shew that the deification of Hitler is, essentially, the making of him into the mundane Messiah of crude Jewish belief. Their theology admits of other gods: it is a deification of force, and force is something that can, conceivably, be countered by a still greater might. It may even one day be proved, for it is something that can be proved, belonging as it does to this world which is available for our inspection. So long as their force is, seemingly, overwhelming, so long will their god befriend them,

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uphold their arms and reward their dead. But this god is really of this earth, so the immortality he offers is subject to the maintenance of German strength. 'I am tempted', says Goebbels, 'to believe in a Germanic god rather than in a Christian one. We are not working for the next world, but for this one' (1939). The plainest statement of all comes from an American Nazi: 'This time God Almighty is not on the side of the hypocritical blasphemers... God Almighty stands and falls with the strong German arms which clear the path for the whole Christian world' (*The Free American*, 1940).

In contrast to this our patriotism, our morale, avoids any conscious reference to there being a British god or to the God worshipped in church being really British. We have irrational feelings of identification with forces of cosmic range and permanence but they are expressed only in the symbols of the orator or of the poet. We worship our country, which is its tradition, its ideals; we do not make its soil holy nor do we confine what is British to particular bits of territory. Everyone is familiar with Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier*, how he begins:

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England.

and goes on to describe what a jolly, comfortable place England is, with the implication that his spirit will be in that delectable land. Once when quoting these lines to a class as an example of the unlocalizability of 'England', I remarked that no German could have written that poem. He would rather, I said, grant immortality to the soldier who died in battle on foreign territory only if that territory became permanently German. Shortly thereafter I came across just this sentiment from the pen of a journalist written during the last war: 'A vale which has been won by German blood! In recent days the waters of the Meuse have often flowed blood-red. Many a warrior has sunk into these depths. Longing and hope rise in our hearts. May destiny determine that all the dead, after a

## OVERVALUATION OF FORCE

triumphant war, shall sleep at rest in a German valley' (Heinrich Binder in *Mit dem Hauptquartier nach Westen*).

This German faith is an uneasy one because it is so materialistic. To prove a spiritual claim in this world is impossible; but to prove that a force is irresistible is feasible, for it requires only a demonstration of that degree of power. That, perhaps, is why the Germans will interrupt a successful economic or diplomatic programme to substitute war. Their faith must be proved if it is to endure.

But there is another reason for their rushing into war. Force stands first in their scale of values, so high, indeed, that it is deified. If deified, it must be treated with respect and worshipped. Truth and righteousness go with force; it is holy and must be treated sacramentally. To mishandle it would be sacrilege. So it must be used in such a way as to make its power most manifest; it must not be desecrated by exposing it to conflict with a greater, or even an equal, power. Hence the justification, nay the duty, of striking at the weak and avoiding battle with the strong.

The whole business comes to pieces when proof of superiority is exploited and exaggerated into a justification for the delusion of being omnipotent. Paradoxically, it seems that Germany cannot conquer the world because it is the greatest military power. It has that power because it spends more on its arms than any other country is prepared to do in times of peace. Initial victory, with preponderance of equipment and trained forces, is inevitable. In the flush of victory calculation, which has been cool before, is supplemented by faith. The God of Force is on their side. He is stronger than the gods of German enemies, i.e. moral or spiritual factors that had previously been craftily attacked through political warfare. Force is expected to do what only patient education could accomplish: the inhabitants are expected to fall down and worship force, to co-operate with the conquerors. Before there is proof of such conversion to the New Order, other territories are attacked, all of which means that a considerable part of the army has to become a police force. Further,

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they believe that other countries will be as frightened of German might as they themselves are enthralled by it. Peoples like ourselves and the Americans are challenged, peoples that force has never overthrown and who, therefore, underrate it. If force were not overvalued, Germany might really conquer the world, although it would be a slow process. She ought to nibble, consolidating each bit of territory, really Germanizing it before moving on to the next foray; and each bite should be not quite big enough to excite lethargic, but potentially powerful, nations to fight a preventive war. This would seem to be a feasible policy, but is it? The difficulty is purely psychological. If Germany went slow, she would not be overvaluing force, it would be balanced nicely with the moral factors. This would mean a lesser enthusiasm for armament, a consequently weaker army and therefore a lack of that overwhelming force which can guarantee a bloodless victory. It might even mean the abandonment of a predatory policy.

This is an illustration of the operation of a scale of values. No merely human judge could estimate with nicety what the perfect scale should be, which means that we all have more or less false scales. The Germans, with a materialistic outlook, naturally put what is measurable at the top of the scale. Thus force becomes an object of worship and its accumulation the main incentive to action; it takes on a moral quality and eventually gains magical attributes. This last follows from the feeling of reality attached to what is most highly valued. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' In other words by faith we see accomplished that which we most desire. The day-dream which incorporates our dearest wish has more feeling of reality attached to it than has any passing fancy, and we all tend to allow the *feeling* to slip over into a *sense* of reality. This error of judgment is not so much a positive aberration as a negative one. Factors which stand low in the scale of values have little feeling of reality attached to them: their existence is not denied, but, being apathetic towards them, we just leave them out of

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our calculations. The result is that we rely on our plans for the attainment of a prized objective reaching their fulfilment without opposition from the forces we ought to have reckoned on. This is equivalent to giving our plans attributes of power not intrinsic to their nature, and that is magic.

The Germans see only armaments. We see only 'Right'. We, relying on our moral strength, reduce our armaments and become in the German eyes defenceless. If the German did not overvalue force he would see in advance that morale may uphold a nation in adversity until it can rearm. If force were truly omnipotent, this could never happen.

As I have just indicated, our scale of values has resulted in thinking that is just as awry as that of our enemy's. We naturally feel that if one extreme or another must be sought, ours is the better; but surely regard for self-preservation ought to keep us nearer to the golden mean. Right makes might we are prone to think, and this is used to rationalize sloth and avoid the sacrifices that reasonable armament would involve. 'Trust in God and keep your powder dry' is made into 'Trust in God and you will need no powder'. Even when war has broken out, our peril is not properly realized and that is because similar indolence in the past has not been disastrous. We have no Sedan in our history and so we remember the last battle, 'which we always win', and forget the ignominies that preceded it—the victory is pleasant to recall and the prior defeats are repugnant. One of the basic elements in our way of life is the code of games, so we fight our wars as if they were games until it is forced on us that war is business and a grim business at that. (An indication of preference for a sporting engagement is the regularity with which reports of actions are always so given as to indicate that the enemy was in stronger force than were our troops. If true, that would mean appallingly bad staff work: it is not good business to undertake any venture with insufficient resources.) Similarly no all-out effort is made, either in recruitment and training of troops or in the supply of munitions until

## OF FORCE

disasters have so crowded in on us as to make us wonder whether this time we have not let things drift beyond the point of recovery. Only then do we realize that the national deity helps them that help themselves, that there is no magic in high ideals, that they are objects of devotion and service, not agencies which will serve us because we profess faith in them. Only when we begin to wonder whether, after all, we might be defeated do we really become invincible.

Being invincible means being victorious only because the enemy has to give up the struggle. It does not mean the positive kind of victory that is won by an invading army. We are not a militaristic country and so, perhaps, our triumphs will never be of that order. At any rate, ever since this war began I have been unable to see how we could win this war but have been serenely confident that the Germans would lose it. This view has been based on the difference between the morales of the two belligerents. It was the Napoleon who said that God was on the side of the big battalions who also said that the English never knew when they were defeated. 'Big battalions' means a reliance on force, something that is measurable, tangible, localizable. Such a leader knows when he is defeated because he can make up a balance sheet and see whether his assets are disappearing or not. But reliance on moral principles is a dependence on something that cannot be found in order to measure it, it is unlocalizable, it has no 'vital centre'. London is the capital of Britain, of the Empire, in a sense of the democracies of the world. Here, surely, is the heart that might be stabbed. Stabbed it was by the Luftwaffe, even the home of the Mother of Parliaments was largely destroyed, yet the only effect on morale this had was to fortify the spirit of resistance and to make Americans wonder if they ought not to take a hand in the game. On the other hand the Germans, fighting with specific objectives in view and with reliance on forces that can be measured, must have a morale that is vulnerable in a way that British morale is not. If its original inspiration was conquest, then a failure to achieve that conquest spells total failure. If



## *CONDITIONS FOR COLLAPSE OF GERMAN MORALE*

force is worshipped and relied on, then morale will be high so long as the odds are in Germany's favour, but it will inevitably sink when those—quite calculable—odds are reversed. Even a stalemate deprives Germany of that on which reliance has been placed, namely a superiority in arms. Germans can fight magnificent rear-guard actions but only, except on the part of a few picked troops, when there is a belief that reserves are coming up which will shatter the enemy. German morale will break when there is a call to fight, backs to the wall, without hopes being entertained of reserves coming into action, when the people as a whole realize that the war is costing them more than anything their conquests could gain them in a measurable future. When their magic has failed, they will not fight to preserve something that has stood low in their scale of values, something unworthy of the single-minded devotion of a Nordic hero, something that was only an hypocrisy of their enemy.

The factors of morale are intangible because they are psychological and nothing psychological is truly measurable (in spite of useful fictions used in intelligence and similar testing). Consequently it is impossible to make predictions that include a time element. We cannot draw a curve of morale and predict when it is going to cross the base line. But we can say that it is improving or deteriorating, or we can with confidence predict that it will ultimately collapse under certain conditions. If one can believe that, with the wealth of Russia and the democracies against her, Germany can gain the assets she needs to repay her expenses before she is exhausted, then one may believe that her morale will last. But, if the contrary be true, then, I hold, she will collapse and collapse, too, before her powers of resistance in the field have melted away. That is to say, she will either surrender before her armies have had to retreat to her own borders, or, if there is serious invasion of her territory, the very fact of its being an invasion will lead her to offer it a negligible resistance. Where and how the break may come will be suggested at the end of this book.

### *BRITISH SCALE OF VALUES:*

But before leaving the theme of scale of values, its application in the understanding of a grievous and urgent imperial problem should be considered. Events in the Far East have shewn that the Empire has not been in too healthy a state. The disease may not be mortal (although our enemies would like to think it so and some pessimists at home seem to fear it may be), but it is, at least, serious. Political illnesses are not to be cured with a bottle of medicine any more than individual neuroses can be. A psychological ill demands a psychological remedy. Can psychopathology help us here, and if so, how?

This century has seen a great advance in the knowledge of the causes of mental diseases and neuroses and of how to treat them. In the most general terms the following conclusions have been reached. Patients suffer from symptoms because they have failed to solve their problems for one of two reasons, either they are too stupid or too weak to cope with them (in which case their cure is impossible or partial) or they do not understand the true nature of their problems. The latter is because important factors are unconscious. Effective and lasting cure can be accomplished only when what has been unconscious is revealed, enabling the patient to tackle his problems with whatever intelligence, courage and determination he enjoys. It might be thought that the physician who turns up the lights, so to speak, who reveals the bogies haunting the dark places of the mind, could out of his wisdom tell the patient just what to do to be saved. Unfortunately, experience shews this not to be possible: the cards may be placed on the table for him, but the patient has to play the hand for himself. If the psychologist can help in the treatment of a national sickness, it will be by analysing the causes and not by saying what ought to be done.

I have already tried to explain how national ideals are unconscious and are expressed in a variety of political theories and practices that are but symbols for what is felt rather than grasped with full conscious understanding. In an individual the interests that are most potent in his life spring from sources he cannot see and that are as powerful

### BRITISH VALUES: TOLERANCE

as they are unknown. So do his symptoms if he has any. The same is probably true of social groups that have been integrated together so firmly as to form true units. The forces which inspire the group to greatness may also get out of hand simply because they cannot be seen. Hence there may be times when it is necessary for a country, a nation, to ask itself why it is following a certain path and where that path is leading, rather than just to follow an impulse to go in the direction that feels right. In other words a national ideal may, at times, be too unconscious, too much of a drift and not enough of a quest. At such times there ought to be honest self-examination, so that, so far as is possible, intelligence may be substituted for instinct.

Let us try therefore to discover what elements operate to produce our national ideal. We must remember that it is an integration of forces, not a fixed structure. It is a fluid process that, like the course of a stream, may seem to bend and twist and flow in many different directions, although it is really always moving towards the sea. Further, we should not expect to find any simple elements that are characteristically British. All civilizations are compounded from the same fundamental units; it is their grouping together in peculiar combinations and the arrangement of these in a characteristic scale of values that differentiates one people from another.

It is frequently said that the peculiar genius of British polity is compromise. Less frequently it is pointed out that, perhaps, *tolerance* is a better term. Conflicting parties do not unite to form a group with ideals that are a true combination of what has been quarrelled about: neither abandons its 'principles', but each draws in its horns a bit and neither tries to dominate the other by force—only by conversion. This is well illustrated in the Church of England, where for centuries 'High' and 'Low' have existed side by side and none but rare fanatics ever seek the annihilation of opponents through legislation. The overriding belief in tolerance has resulted in the coexistence of many apparent incompatibles in both the social life

and the political institutions of Great Britain. Some of these may be mentioned without any pretence of making the list complete.

First there is an ancient caste system, descended from feudal days but now operating chiefly in a 'social' stratification. Its functional significance will be discussed fully in the next section of this book and need not be dealt with here beyond mention of the fact (or claim?) that it is important. But it stands in flat contradiction with the acknowledged principle of majority rule. The 'old school tie' and the labour union's badge or button each represents a claim for privilege. The former is often derided and rarely defended; the latter is often defended and rarely derided. Either is allowed to make a claim for 'rights' but public opinion sees to it that neither is empowered to exercise them.

Next we may mention freedom of speech and law-abidingness. Each of these is a prized British characteristic or institution. We are allowed to attack in speech or writing even the fundamentals of our civilizations but expected to obey laws (and conventions) that we declare to be vicious.

Similarly, the right to private property is held to be sacrosanct, yet parliament has the power through taxation of various forms not merely to sequester that property but to take it from one class and (through 'social' legislation) to give it to another. If anyone draws attention to this discrepancy he gets no hearing. It is assumed that the numbers of those deriving benefit from discriminative taxation is larger than the number mulcted and that, therefore, a plebiscite would approve of the confiscation. That this, in turn, violates the principle of the protection of minorities is never mentioned.

By 'democracy' is customarily meant government by the people. Yet in practice the day-to-day administration is in the hands of a bureaucracy—the civil services; policy is determined by an oligarchy, the cabinet; and it is all done in the name of a single, supreme ruler, the King. Clearly the meaning of 'democracy' requires some analysis. In practice we find the word, like 'freedom', used as a

## BRITISH VALUES: 'DEMOCRACY'

catch-word in debate. Either word is used as justification for upholding any one of the above-mentioned tendencies: the side first invoking 'democracy' or 'freedom' scores a point in debate. The words are shibboleths. Yet millions of us are prepared to die for them. No one will die for a mere word, it must be for what that word suggests to him. So what do these terms really mean to us? Hitler claims, and the Germans probably believe, that the Reich is fighting for freedom. So they are. They wish liberty to exploit the world solely in the interests of the *Herrenvolk*, the god-like chosen people. We retort that this is a slavery similar to that already imposed on German citizens. But no kind of social organization is possible without restriction of personal liberty. What is the degree of individual, or national, freedom that we wish to establish or maintain? Again, democracy cannot be government by the people themselves for that is anarchy;<sup>1</sup> it must be government by rulers chosen by the people and working in the interests of the people. Hitler was elected by a larger majority than any ever recorded in a 'democratic' country and his policy has the enthusiastic support of nearly all Germans. Yet Hitler derides democracy. It may therefore be that democracy is differentiated from the authoritarian states in its treatment of minorities. We do not believe that a minority should be allowed to seize power by force or that a minority should be victimized by the majority or, indeed, by the government. These ideals are explicitly disclaimed by the Nazis. Similarly the freedom we cherish is that of minorities, descending even to the minority of one. One individual has the same right to protection and justice as any other citizen, regardless of his political or religious faith.

Our national ideal would seem, then, to keep alive with mutual tolerance a number of inconsistent principles. This tolerance is called

<sup>1</sup> It is not generally realized that anarchism is not a destructive nihilism but a Utopian political theory. The state as such should have no authority, laws and law-enforcement being replaced by the voluntary co-operation of citizens. It is held that if force were abrogated, the altruistic elements in human nature would develop as they cannot do when fear of authority controls behaviour.

### *BRITISH VALUES: IMPERIALISM*

'freedom' for the individual citizen or the minority group, while the resultant form of government is called 'democratic'. This, however, represents only one aspect of the national ideal, it refers to the way in which we want to live and move and have our being. But there is an outside world towards which some kind of an attitude must be adopted. External orientation inevitably contributes its share to the national ideal and, indeed, inner and outer are but the obverse and reverse of the same medal.

There seem to be three components in the British attitude towards the world at large. First, our way of living is to be defended, even to the death. This determines friendships and sympathies with other countries as well as animosities. We are friendly towards other 'democracies' or at least tolerant; towards other powers who have markedly different ideas of government we are hostile or at least suspicious. Secondly, pride in our institutions is reflected in a missionary attitude. It is a duty to spread throughout the world the benefits of our democracy, a duty which is naturally most easily fulfilled in such parts of the globe as are backward in material culture as well. In practice the introduction of British justice goes easily with economic exploitation and the latter constitutes the third element in the ideal. It is our duty to civilize backward races in every sense of the term. Inevitably we look for some reward. We may be prepared to give our religion and our political ideas in pure missionary zeal, but we cannot exploit the assets of undeveloped territories without compensation. Even if we were so altruistic, we simply could not afford it. So, as a rider to our ideal, there is surreptitiously included a duty to defend the economic rights we have established.

This is our imperialism, as curious a mixture of incompatibles as is our democracy. In part it is genuinely altruistic—many heroes have given their lives while carrying the white man's burden in a spirit of pure service; in part it is unquestionably selfish. But are we correct in speaking of it in the present tense, or, indeed, would it be

## THE FUTURE OF THE EMPIRE

wholly correct to say, this *was* our imperialism? It is really a process, an evolution that had developed a long way before it was recognized as existing or as requiring any theory for its description. It was sometimes crudely predatory, sometimes a matter of a straight bargain with the natives of a territory that was to be settled, a bargain entered into with no more desire to cheat than has any upright merchant. But whether we have gained our possessions by fair means or foul, their exploitation for purely selfish ends has never received public support and has never been tolerated except for short periods. Envious powers abroad and muck-rakers at home have both tried to prove that the Empire is purely a system of selfish exploitation. But that won't do: there has always been a strong feeling of responsibility associated with the British Raj.

The evolution of this imperial responsibility and the ways in which it has been met have brought about problems that will not be solved by a policy of drift, or by doing what feels right to a conscience that is either morbidly sensitive or easily soothed. Intuitions are not enough, nor should any minority however vociferous be allowed to settle what policy is to be followed. What is involved should be a matter of public knowledge and discussion and *some* decision should be reached, even though it has manifest defects. Perfect schemes belong to the millennium and attainment of that blissful state will not be accelerated by a rejection of everything that shews imperfections.

Imperial responsibility has been met in three ways: paternalistic rule, the granting of local autonomy to what have been dependencies, and the pursuit of a policy which represents a combination of the first two. Under paternalism an effort is made so to educate the people that they may become capable of self-government. During the last war Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa all contributed in the fullness of their powers to the prosecution of the war. After the victory, it was felt that equality of sacrifice justified equality of status, an opinion that led to the Statute of Westminster.

## INDIA

By it these countries received 'dominion status' and the Empire was divided into two different parts. One part became more of an alliance of free nations than a confederation or an empire as that institution had previously been conceived. The other part was Great Britain with its dependencies, India and the colonies, ruled paternally.

In paternal rule there is the relation of the father to his family, not perhaps so much the kind of family we now know as the ancient family or the tribe that is ruled by a patriarch. The ruler has full authority, makes laws, dispenses justice and leads in offence or defence. In return for these services he is entitled to as much of the wealth of the family or tribe as he chooses to collect—or as it pays to collect. This system probably worked as well as it did, and when it did, because it was natural to a people habituated to squirearchy with its similar mixture of responsibility to tenants and authority over their lives. Although the fact is obvious, account is rarely taken of dominion status being given to peoples who are either emigrants from Britain or emigrants from countries with a similar culture and political outlook. Arguments used in favour of dominion status for India do not reckon with the possibility that education of people who have never enjoyed self-government may be a tedious or an impossible task. Undaunted by this consideration there has been for a long time an effort made to train natives in administration and the ideals of democracy, with the avowed intent of eventually turning over to them the government of their territories and peoples. Since the last war there has been an insistent demand that 'education' should be assumed to have been complete or that 'freedom' should at once be given on the assumption that the natives could complete the education for themselves if they were once given responsibility. This demand was made by many of the leaders of various parties in India and it was echoed in Britain, the reverberations being audible in the Dominions and even in the United States.

Why have the Indians asked for dominion status? The more educated of them may well realize from visits to the democracies



what the blessings of freedom are—to a freedom-loving people. These patriots, we may assume, are sincerely desirous of giving these benefits to their countrymen. Do they realize the responsibilities that go with freedom? Many native politicians, in India and elsewhere, have frankly admitted that they seek power for themselves, power that they cannot achieve under the British Raj: they ask for 'democracy' but hope to get an opportunity to enrich themselves with money or prestige. Motives are everywhere mixed and it is a wise judge who can say with truth what is in any man's heart. But at least it is now demonstrated (April 1942) that no party can be found in India that is prepared to guarantee that under a system of Indian self-government there would be no attempt to victimize minorities either by force or by the power of a majority vote.

For the moment the Indian crisis has passed, but what we are chiefly interested in, if we are to understand imperial policy and what determines it, is the origin of the backing there has been in Britain for Indian self-government. Certain idealists have always been for it, of course. These have been people who were unhappy about some of the predatory activities in the past, the results of which were still profitable to us, and who hated the mixed motives of the missionary and the trader that seemed to actuate imperialists. Their numbers were greatly augmented after the last war. Why?

In the first place we have to reckon with war weariness. We had fought to make the world safe for democracy and we had won, but we were tired; tired of sacrifice. We wanted quiet, we wanted to get on with our own jobs, we were tired of adventure. Colonial service was an adventure and it was a responsibility. There was a period of 'safety first' that affected the entry into the colonial service adversely, as was seen in the Universities. Undergraduates, who wanted to go abroad, were dissuaded by their parents, who sought to keep them at home. Another factor which became more important at this period was a change in the social status of recruits to the services. (The effect of this will be commented on in a later chapter.) We had

## UTOPIANISM

fought to gain an untroubled peace and we found unrest everywhere. So there began a great questioning. The young, who had inherited a sad world, very naturally thought that their parents had made that world and made it badly. They had made the war, so the young were pacifists. Whatever was traditional came under fire. Imperialism made wars, so imperialism was bad. It was also a responsibility. If a responsibility can be shelved through the performance of a generous act, here is obviously a way of getting the best of both worlds. Nora Waln, in her book *The House of Exile*, reports that when we gave up our concession at Hankow, some Chinese comments were to the effect that we were tired of the responsibilities of Empire and were using 'self-determination' as an excuse for evading them. It is certainly a facile rationalization. At any rate the period between the two wars was one marked by a great deal of Utopianism. Fascism, communism, socialism, any kind of ideology that represented a system as yet untried was hailed as the solution of all our ills. Equally any system based on experience and supported by tradition was taboo.

Utopianism is so potent an influence in the determination of policy that it demands some scrutiny. It seems to be conditioned by two beliefs, one barely conscious and the other quite unconscious. The first is that human intelligence can fabricate a set of regulations that will modify not merely human behaviour but human motives. If society is imperfect, this creed says, it is not due to defects in human nature but in the system which regulates society: given a perfect system, those who make up the society will like the system, adapt themselves to it and thereby become perfect. Since the human mind is at once as complicated a thing as is available for our study and since we know little about it as yet, this confidence would seem to rest on what the Greeks called *hubris* and moral theologians labelled as spiritual pride. The second, and unconscious, belief is in magic. The way in which this arises in connection with a scale of values has already been explained. In this instance the desirability of a goal to

## OUR PROBLEMS

be attained is so fortified by emotion that the goal acquires a feeling of reality. Perfection is realizable. This is then transferred to the means whereby the miracle may be accomplished.

The potency given to 'democracy' is an excellent example of this unconscious reasoning. In our political thinking we rank 'democracy' and 'freedom'—they are largely equivalent terms—at the top of our scale of values. We would die for them; can anything be more important? If democracy can win from us this devotion it must be the most valuable thing on earth, something that subject races yearn for and would prize, if they had it, as highly as we do. Doubtless they would, if they were capable of grasping it. But what we call 'democracy' is a product of many centuries of political evolution, a peculiar kind of tolerance; it is a state of mind, not a paper constitution. The Japanese doubtless prize the institution of *hara-kiri*, but, if it were legalized in this country, should we adopt it? No more should we expect a people who for centuries have regarded government as the duty, the trade, of a particular small class to prize something that carries with it a responsibility they have never shouldered. Yet that is what the proponents of immediate self-government believe will happen if a 'democratic' constitution be given to peoples who are—from our point of view—backward in political development. These reformers believe in magic.

The cards are on the table, but how shall we play them? We must realize that it is as idle to give subject races self-government with the idea of their thereby achieving the kind of liberty we prize as it would be to give boots to a fish. But mental evolution is not such a tedious process as is the change of bodily form. There is no reason to suppose that the natives of Africa or Asia could not gradually be educated up to the point where not a few, but the majority of the people, were politically conscious and saw in tolerance the secret of freedom. But the process would necessarily be slow. What therefore should we do?

It is time to take stock: not only has the problem become a part of war strategy, it will be even more urgent when 'peace comes. No

## OUR PROBLEMS

matter whether the Empire was acquired by fair means or foul,<sup>1</sup> our possession of it forces on us certain responsibilities. What are we going to do about them? There are several conceivable solutions.

The first is that we should abandon our scale of values and modify our national ideal. No longer should we regard the kind of liberty which we have painfully evolved through centuries of conflict and martyrdom as something that is good for any but ourselves. Let us abandon the missionary spirit and make no more pretence of trying to give backward peoples 'liberty'. We should thereby escape the accusation of hypocrisy and we could judge the value of colonial possession from the standpoint of pure expedience. This would seem to be the Nazi or the Fascist type of policy. There is no nonsense there about the white man's burden.

Or we can retain our ideal but admit we are too weak or too weary to give it effect. In that case we have either to get out of our colonial possessions and India or we have to give them to some other power with ideals similar to our own but more virile. If we get out, we should do so with our eyes open. We should leave in the expectation that, when we are gone, tribe will fall upon tribe, a majority will enslave a minority or that some other power will step in and enslave the lot. It is no disgrace to fail in a task that is too big for one, but it is morally degrading to make a virtue out of retreat.

Finally, of course, we might, in humility, with greater honesty and with firmer resolve face the responsibilities with which we have, more or less inadvertently, saddled ourselves. If we hope within our lifetime to see the goal achieved, we shall, of course, be doomed to disappointment. But if we are prepared to forgo the hopes of magical achievement and to regard the struggle for attainment of a lofty ideal as better than a comfortable complacency, then something will be gradually accomplished. Let me finish with an illustration that may

<sup>1</sup> The irrelevance of history in this respect is shewn in one fact: most of the territory now-occupied by the 'civilized' races is in possession of the descendants of invaders. Is there morally, as well as legally, a statute of limitations?

## *OUR PROBLEMS*

seem trivial yet is packed with deep meaning. Dogs and cats are proverbial enemies. Yet who has not seen a puppy and a kitten brought up together become life-long friends? If all dogs and all cats were brought up together, would their automatic hostility be so marked as it is? Admittedly the association in infancy would have to be rigorously maintained, but dog and cat natures are poles apart. All men, whatever their colour, are, biologically, of the same species and their varying natures have been socially determined. This social influence is not changed by revolution but it is capable of evolution. Shall we attempt to guide this evolution or shall we 'sink back shuddering from the quest'?

## Part III. SOME PROBLEMS IN ORGANIZATION



### CHAPTER 7

#### *DICTATORSHIP AND DEMOCRACY*

MORALE and organization are intimately connected for two general reasons. First, morale is meaningless, or at least ineffective, unless it promotes action, even if that take the form of passive resistance—it is after all resistance. A most important expression of morale is confidence in an activity to be undertaken and no communal measures are possible without organization. So it follows that morale is bound up with confidence in organization and may be shaken if this faith is lost. Secondly, there may be a correlation between the objectives or ideals of a community and the kind of organization it adopts; its peculiar type of organization—if it be political for example—may be an expression of its ideal. So, just as the outlook of a country may determine its particular kind of morale, so may it condition its organization. The three factors are constantly interacting.

Thus organization must be studied if one is to understand morale but this is a difficult, if not hazardous, topic for discussion in a psychological work. In the first place the data include some that are not really psychological, so that the suspicious reader may charge the author with attempting an invasion of fields to which he has, professionally, no right of entry. The answer to this would be to admit the impeachment but to claim that, if the psychologist cannot contribute his share to the solution of these problems, no more can the sociologist, the historian, the economist, or the politician, each working alone from the point of view of his craft; the study of organization is nobody's business and it is everybody's. Secondly, theories as to organization are, inevitably, the stuff of which political

## NATIONAL POLICY

creeds are made. A theorist may be able to examine a criticism of his views objectively, but the believer's attitude is invariably subjective. So any one who tries—so far as he is able—to be dispassionate in his analysis is likely to tread on everybody's corns and to be dubbed a mere propagandist by all in turn. It is because I think there are important psychological factors involved in this problem, factors that are currently undetected or ignored, that I assume the risks of being called either biased or unbiased.<sup>1</sup> But there is another reason why this discussion must be undertaken.

Every aggregation of people who form a group do so in virtue of their having some common objective, some purpose in their coming together for a joint effort. In this co-operation individual actions must be correlated and the correlation implies organization no matter whether the latter consists merely of the imitation of leaders or is codified in elaborate legislation. In national groups the activities of the individual citizens are, fundamentally and inevitably, oriented in two directions, towards co-operative efforts which through division of labour increase the wealth of all, and towards the protection or aggrandizement of the group as a whole. The way in which labour and its reward are to be divided and what is worth struggling for in competition with other countries are both matters of policy. The former implies one type of organization or another, while the latter usually entails it. Consequently, policy becomes inextricably involved with organization and policy merges into the national ideal. It would indeed be not grossly inaccurate to say that national ideals refer largely to contrasting theories of organization.

There are two opposing principles in state organization either of which, if followed exclusively, will lead sooner or later to disaster;

<sup>1</sup> During the last war I wrote a slight volume on the psychology of war. One of the most pontifical of English journals in reviewing it damned it for its objectivity. Nothing, it said, should be written about war, during a war, that was not propaganda. This is, of course, a defensible position although not one I should hold, for I believe it to be an aspect of that kind of political outlook which may win a war but will always lose a peace.

## *Dictators Determine Policy*

nations differ in the degrees to which they go in following one or the other method and in the kinds of compromise they adopt. These principles may be called the dictator and the democratic types of organization or ideal. In the former an autocrat, who may be either an hereditary monarch, a soldier who has seized power, or the duly elected leader of the nation, dictates policy and governs the machine which gives it effect. In the latter the people as a whole determine policy and appoint representatives to codify the policy and organize its operation. It is nonsense to say that one system means slavery and the other freedom, for it is impossible to have any kind of co-operation, any kind of division of labour, without restriction of personal liberty. It is rather a question of the degree of freedom attainable under the two systems.

A dictatorship is a form of government in which the leader (he is, rather, a driver) determines the policy of the state and how it is to be carried out. Since differences in policy and organization are what give character to states, it follows that dictator states gain their differentiating peculiarities from the plans of their rulers. When Louis XIV said, 'L'État, c'est moi', he made a statement that contained as much truth as it did arrogance. France was not a mere collection of provinces each controlled by some locally powerful noble simply because it was the King who imposed what unitary objective and effort there was. It was his policy that made the Burgundian or the Breton a Frenchman, in so far as he was one. This identification of the ruler with the state has an interesting psychological result, one that is not without significance for morale. If the dictator does succeed in imposing his will on the masses, then the power he wields is the power of all the citizens whose efforts are thus correlated. This is something vastly greater than the influence which any one of his subjects can exercise. So it is superhuman and the step from the superhuman to the divine is a short one. Dictators tend, therefore, to be deified. It was seen in the case of the Roman emperors quite literally; it occurred with Napoleon, perhaps as a metaphor,



## *HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION*

perhaps as a consciously accepted faith; it is certainly present in what is attributed to Hitler to-day in the adulation of his loyal followers.

Having decided on his policy the dictator must get it implemented. This involves an intricacy of planning and a range of technical knowledge and experience which is manifestly outside the capacity of any one man no matter how gifted. He may sketch out a programme but the details of both planning and execution have to be left to others. So he appoints sub-leaders, each being given full authority within the field assigned to him for exploitation. General policy, strategy so to speak, is dictated to him but he has a free hand in deciding the tactics to be employed. Liberty of action is as wide as is the range of operation entrusted to him: he cannot change the objective towards which he must work but he can choose by what means he wishes to attain it. He, in turn, is posed with a problem too big for one individual to handle, so he farms it out to a number of assistants who, in their turn, employ officials of a still lower grade. Thus there is built up a pyramid of hierarchical authority. At each level there exists proportionate liberty of action, power and responsibility. At the top is the dictator with liberty that is complete in determination of policy and is restricted in action only by the capacity of the whole nation and the power of rival countries. At the bottom is the labourer who cannot choose where or how he is to work but can still bully his wife and children.

It is important to realize that this is not merely a skeleton outline of the kind of organization characteristic of dictatorships but that it is the only possible scheme for the correlation of the activities of large numbers of people—activities that are to be concerted for the attainment of specific ends. Hence it is the kind of organization seen in all services, civil or military, and in all big businesses. It carries with it two important implications.

The first derives from the pre-existence of the goal that is sought. It is the organization of a group of people who are brought together

### *SPECIFICITY OF HIERARCHICAL GOALS*

for, and co-operate in, a specific purpose. Officials are chosen for their capacity to deal with the subsidiary tasks that contribute to the particular end in view. Another objective would call for other tasks and, therefore, other abilities. It can deal competently with all foreseen contingencies but is adaptable only within those limits. The absence of one bolt of a particular size can hold up all assembly in a quantity production motor works. A country organized for war, either immediate or prospective, turns from pure science to applied science; in so doing it cuts off the supply of truly novel principles and will therefore lose in a long war against a country that has retained the versatility flowing from pure research. That is the position of Germany to-day, where pure science has been abandoned in favour of engineering. Russia has been organized for the exploitation of its resources, human and material. The Kremlin can hand out to the workers such amusements and 'culture' as it can imagine they want. But, when wealth brings with it more leisure and therefore individual cultivation of aesthetic and intellectual tastes, the success of the 'culture' will produce an individuality of demand which no central agency could satisfy. Then either cultural evolution will be curtailed or it will drift out of the hands of the state, thus weakening its totalitarianism. It might be objected that a wise dictator—or his equivalent an oligarchy—would plan not only for war but also for the development of economics and the arts. Quite true, but what genius could foresee the relative importance a generation later on of the various objectives for which there would be specific organizations set up? The very efficiency of the hierarchical system depends on the specialized training and knowledge *and* thinking in each organization. The man switched from one quest to another would have not merely to acquire a new technique but to unlearn his old one and its habit of thought. In a word hierarchical organization is incompatible with evolution.

The second implication has to do with a difference between what are held to be civic virtues in dictatorships or democracies. In a

## EFFICIENCY AND SPECIALISM

totalitarian country the road to honour is that of advancement in a state service and this is gained through efficiency and specialized knowledge. In Germany, for instance, *Tüchtigkeit*, 'efficiency', is regarded as a real virtue. In England, on the other hand, it may be enviable just as a large income is, but it certainly is not a virtue. Indeed, in so far as it is likely to be correlated with a hard ruthlessness, it is likely to be regarded as unlovely. Germany, again, is the spiritual home of the specialist. Here he is distrusted, derided, or tolerated as an unfortunate necessity. 'He knows everything about his subject except its relative unimportance' is a gibe welcome to English ears, while differences between specialists give the layman a grim, I-told-you-so kind of pleasure. In Germany the specialist has authority granted him by common consent, and this is a perquisite of his office, so to speak. Hence, even in the academic world, prestige goes with status in the academic hierarchy and this prestige validates intellectual output. Not unnaturally authority is jealously guarded, so polemics are protracted and bitter, a phenomenon which the Briton or American finds shocking and amusing in turn.

It will be becoming clear that I am assuming, or implying by my examples, that hierarchical organization is not in harmony with the ethos of a democratic state; we should therefore pause to consider why this might be. This necessitates a scrutiny of what we mean by the term democracy. Literally, of course, the term is nonsensical, for a people cannot rule themselves. They can, however, choose their rulers and they can dictate to these rulers what the national aims are to be. But Hitler is the duly elected President of Germany and there is more to be said for the view that his policy is that of the German people than can be urged against it. Yet Hitler spurns democracy and we deny its existence in Germany. So there must be more to it than that. It would seem rather that everything turns on the treatment of minorities. As has been explained, in a democracy a minority may neither govern nor may it be persecuted and victimized. Here is a fundamental difference. A totalitarian country is such

## THE MEANING OF 'DEMOCRACY'

because minority opinion and action is disallowed. A prescribed and accepted system governs the activities of all members in the community. No individual is allowed to use his own judgment as to how he can best serve society. (He may express a preference, just as a recruit might for some branch of service when he joins the army, but he has no right of choice.) Nor is he entitled to publish views as to changes in national policy, to make converts to his opinions such as might bring into being a minority that might, in time, become a majority. The state that is in theory paramount cannot in practice countenance minority opinion which might agitate for an entirely different kind of state. A democracy, which tolerates minorities, admits the possibility of state policy being changed. It cannot, therefore, have and hold any given policy with the consistency of the authoritarian state. Consequently it does not encourage large-scale hierarchical organization, particularly since this restricts individual liberty, especially in the lower levels. Indeed, instead of the efficiency of officials being admired, they are expected on the contrary to be hide-bound, interested in the letter rather than the spirit of regulations and officious if not actually stupid or self-seeking.

The *raison d'être* of a democracy is not the plan of an autocrat but an unconscious ideal cementing into one society a number of people who co-operate for the furtherance of the ideal but cherish the right to modify it as they go along. Formal organization can be established only for clearly foreseen ends. Hence in a democracy, that does not know where it is going but only feels its way, there are organizations for the carrying out of the minimum essential services, civil and military, but all else is left to private bodies and individual initiative. There is a great loss in efficiency, but elasticity is maintained and, above all, there is individual liberty. If we could only realize that liberty and efficiency were incompatible we might accept more philosophically the inefficiencies exhibited in our services. It is all a question of what one chooses as more desirable. If I thought efficiency to be the greatest of civic virtues I should long since have

## *DEMOCRATIC LEADERS INTERPRETERS*

moved to Germany. But I, for one, prefer freedom even at the risk of not muddling through.

In a totalitarian state those placed in authority are chosen for their presumed efficiency in carrying out specific foreseen tasks and the same principle holds within the various permanent services in a democracy. But, as I have stated, a democratic country as a whole has no formulated objective towards which it moves in accordance with a preformed plan. Its policy is as fluid as its ideal is unconscious. So its leaders, who are politicians rather than officials, have the task of formulating the policy which may give actual expression to what the people are vaguely wanting. This is their primary function and secondary thereto comes the actual direction of affairs. It follows that the leader in a democratic state is an interpreter in the first instance and an executive as a kind of afterthought. The great statesman is one with a feeling for his country's history, who discerns the trend of its evolution, who knows what it will want in the future and legislates for that in advance of the emergency which makes the need obvious. This is a true leader, neither a driver nor driven by popular outcry. Unfortunately the aspirant to office who looks too far ahead gets out of touch with the plodding multitude: he is held to be a visionary and therefore not a 'practical man'; there is always a tendency to place responsibility in the hands of one who is merely a time-serving politician. The man who formulates in ringing words what the masses are already thinking but cannot articulate for themselves is obviously a practical man, while one who foresees what the people will think to-morrow is one who has his head in the clouds.

Correlated with this is another feature of democratic politics that is both petty and important. A dictator, as we have seen, personifies the state and is therefore deified. As a superhuman being, he is granted privileges that lift him above common men, privileges that symbolize the greatness of the country. (Where there is a limited monarchy the pomp of royalty expresses the majesty of the nation, while its inheritance signifies that the Crown belongs to no one

## DICTATORSHIP AND PRIVILEGE

generation. *Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi* suggests the group's immortality.) In a democracy, while it is at peace, the successful politician must be careful not to 'put on airs', he must advertise his fraternity with the common man. Thus Baldwin's pipe. On the other hand, when war is declared, which means that an all-engrossing objective is clearly seen by all, when action and not interpretation is demanded by the people, then not merely the powers but also the privileges of a dictator are forced on the leader of the government. Hence Winston Churchill's cigar, that, when economy is a watchword and foreign exchange is a vital need of the country, is regarded as a natural appurtenance of his exalted office. This may seem to be a trifling matter and, indeed, it is; yet such a trifle may seem to have monstrous consequences. Modern history records one example of this.

In the autumn of 1916 the people of the United States were of two minds—or of no mind—about the European war. There were two bitterly opposed but non-party and unorganized factions, one of which urged that the country should join the Allies while the other argued that it was and should remain a foreigners' war. There was a presidential election and the Democratic Party nominated Woodrow Wilson for a second term. The two chief claims made for him by his partisans were that he had favoured organized labour and 'He kept us out of war'. His opponent was Hughes, an extremely able and public-spirited man with an excellent record as an administrator. The degree to which the people were of two minds was exhibited in the closeness of the polls everywhere. After several days of uncertainty and several recounts, it was found that the state of California had given a majority to Wilson by a mere handful of votes, and it was the decision of California that meant his return to the White House. Now, on an electioneering trip through the state of California, Hughes had, thoughtlessly, worn a top-hat (he belonged to a generation and a community in which that was natural official garb) and he rode in a closed car. These were affronts to the 'democracy' of Californians and made him many enemies. That top-hat sent Wilson

## *THE PROPHET OF A DEMOCRACY*

to the White House and also to Versailles...the Fourteen Points and the League of Nations. The rejection of the latter by Congress is also interesting. So long as the United States was at war, Americans did not question the dictatorial powers Wilson exercised—they merely criticized his efficiency—but, the moment the war was over, his assumption of the right to speak for Americans and to enrol them in an international undertaking was bitterly resented. So the League of Nations—as much because it was Wilson's baby as for any other reason—was left to the half-hearted care of foster-parents. Momentous events in the evolution of civilization are probably not really dependent on trifling accidents, but, superficially and obviously, that top-hat played a mighty rôle in history.

A prophet, when accepted, can move a people into a frenzy of action and almost miraculous fortitude. Although morale is either potentially present or absent in a people themselves, no one can evoke and maintain it as can a prophet. A prophet is one who interprets the will of God. As we have seen, patriotism and religion are closely related psychologically. An inspiring political leader is one who interprets a nation's soul to its people. Hitler derives his power over Germans from the fact that he is their prophet. And so it is with Winston Churchill. The moment a democracy goes to war, it knows what it wants and therefore seeks a dictator who may co-ordinate all the energies of the state in an effort to achieve victory; one who will have the courage to crush all special interests, to deny to individuals for the time being the very rights for which the people are fighting. But how can he be selected? The common people have no means of judging whether a candidate for leadership has, or has not, the desired executive capacity, so they give their support to the interpreter who can most nearly be described as a prophet. He is one who, as his political record shews, has been identified with the policy now in the ascendant, who like the persecuted prophet has suffered for the truth, or who can evoke the spirit of the ages rather than the merely ephemeral wants which the time-serving politician

## *THE PROPHET OF A DEMOCRACY*

detects. Churchill combines these assets. For years he has repeated his warnings that war was coming and now he speaks a language that would not have been disdained by any of Elizabeth's captains with an oratory that is the despair of rival politicians. Confidence is based on feeling rather than syllogisms. If a leader is regarded as a prophet, he is dowered with a might that is proportionate to the people's determination. Clearly he is powerful; therefore he can control and direct the energies of the nation; therefore he must be a good executive. The logic is shaky, but its effect on morale is galvanic. If he has executive ability, he will make a perfect leader and, so long as the war lasts, he may enjoy privileges denied the common man, he may even assume prerogatives of royalty unchallenged. But when the war is over he must become a common man again, he must persuade and not command, or he will lose popular support and receive the reward due for his service to his country in its hour of need from historians and not from his fellow citizens.



## CHAPTER 8

### *INHERENT DIFFICULTIES IN ORGANIZATION*

I HAVE said that hierarchical organization with its rigid division of labour is incompatible with evolution and this is a topic to which we must now return. It is a principle well illustrated in the biological field. Ants have highly specialized division of labour; ants are highly efficient, so efficient, indeed, that they have survived since an age millions of years antedating the appearance on this globe of our mammalian ancestors. But, if the evidence of geologists is to be believed, ants have not changed one bit during all these aeons of time. Their efficiency in the performance of certain tasks has prevented them from tackling any others. Since now-a-days, when the country's peril has forced on us the adoption and extension of hierarchical organization and its regulation of our lives, there is frequent criticism of officials for faults that are, perhaps, inherent in the system rather than sins of the individual, it may be well to scrutinize the system in an effort to discover the roots of the evil. Why is stratification of authority so prone to rigidity and resourcelessness? We shall see that some of the causes are inherent in the system as such and their effects might be minimized by modifications in organization and practice based on insight into the evil, while others are the product of little-mindedness and selfishness that are given undue scope in officialdom, these being evils that could be greatly reduced if some means were found (or extended) for making them taboo.

When a small number of men are working together, either as equal partners or as employer and employed, co-operation can be secured through purely personal contacts; everyone has access to everyone else. But as organizations increase in size this becomes more and more difficult until, as in Government services or business combines,

## *INTERDEPENDENCE OF ENDS AND MEANS*

it is quite impossible. Inevitably, therefore, two substitutes for personal contact are adopted in the effort to translate policy into action. One is hierarchical organization and the other is rules or regulations. The same phenomenon appears even in the field of morals. In the family instruction through advice and example as well as discipline is on a purely personal basis. In schools rules and a disciplinary hierarchy begin to exclude the consideration of moral problems individually, while in the state as a whole there is a machine for making laws and another for enforcing them both of which treat citizens as if they were numbers and not human beings with personalities. The impersonality of the large corporation or service is notorious, but few people seem to realize how inevitably that characteristic is responsible for inelasticity and incapacity to deal with unforeseen problems.

In a hierarchical organization policy is determined at the top while subordinates have, within an ever narrowing range of choice, to decide how the policy dictated to them will be carried into effect. This is the contrast between strategy and tactics, between law-making and law-enforcement, between capital and labour, or finance and management plus labour. It is, even, the difference between the state and the citizens that compose it. If these discriminations were complete and therefore valid, the difficulties inherent in mere increase of size would matter less. (Indeed when, as in an authoritarian state, the citizen accepts depersonalization, is prepared to be a robot, and regards the state as an objective reality, the system works much more smoothly.) The trouble is, however, that the problems of policy cannot be divorced from those of action, strategy from tactics, or finance from management. This difficulty is particularly acute in democratic government, where the ideal and therefore the policy of the state is concerned so largely with the well-being of its citizens and consequently with the activities most suitable for them as individuals. As a matter of fact democracy is fundamentally at variance with this basic principle of hierarchical organization because, in broad outline

## *THE PROBLEM OF LIAISON*

at least, policy is determined by the people and it is the job of the government to formulate that policy and translate it into terms of action. With this broad issue, however, I am not concerned except to point out that it implies a necessity for profound modification of the principle of stratified authority if democracies are to have workable organizations. I wish rather to draw attention to the implications of the fact that means must modify ends. It is as important that only practicable policies should be formulated as it is that the tasks of workers should be correlated towards the attainment of a common goal. There are two difficulties in the way of this correlation, difficulties that increase almost geometrically with increase of size in any organization. They are liaison and the utilization of expert technical abilities.

If the commander-in-chief meets a private soldier who is on an errand given him by a sergeant and gives him a contrary order, confusion would result and, to prevent this, the general transmits his orders only through a series of subordinates. Apart from possible delays resulting from technical hitches in communications this system works well enough; in its way down from the top to the bottom the interpretation of orders at each level is, theoretically at least, within the intellectual capacity of the officer concerned. But the flow of information from the bottom to the top meets obstructions that are theoretically predictable, as well as, perhaps, obstructionism that is theoretically remediable. Let us take a hypothetical example.

A junior officer, commissioned or non-commissioned, in some battery spots a defect in equipment or in the prescribed method of using this equipment and has a suggestion to make as to improvement in the device or the drill. This he communicates to the major in command of the battery. The major, fully conversant with such practical problems, endorses the proposal and sends it on to the commander of the regiment. This officer is probably also aware of what the gunner is called upon to do and he adds his approval when it goes to the brigadier. The brigadier may have never used this equipment himself because it was issued long after he ceased working

### *LIAISON: VERTICAL AND PERIPHERAL*

in a gun site. But we will give the devil his due and assume that he, too, realizes the problem and supports the recommendation. It now goes to the office of a major-general whose concern is not supposed to be with the minutiae of operations, but who may be presumed to have an intelligence corresponding to his rank. But does he ever see the memorandum? His correspondence is large, much too big for any one man to deal with and it has to be filtered. The selection of what is to be passed on for the decision of the great man himself is necessarily in the hands of an officer—perhaps a non-commissioned one—who has, in theory, a weaker imagination and judgment than those of the officers who have already sponsored the suggestion. His job is definitely not that of determining policy, it is to follow regulations, to find out what regulation is applicable and to apply it. It would be a lucky accident if he had ever been on a gun site or used the device in question. So his very ignorance forces him back on regulations. On the face of it the memorandum contains a criticism of supplies received, so he passes it on to some inspectorate of ordnance. After some weeks the reply gravitates down to the original critic stating either that records shew that the supplies in question had been inspected and passed so that any defect must have been due to mishandling (written by a sergeant or corporal) or that the memorandum does not come into the province of the inspectorate (written by an officer, probably). At least a month has gone by. If the proponents of the scheme have sufficient patience more months are spent in finding, by trial and error, to what department the memorandum ought really to go. The answer is, of course, that there is no department that deals specifically with proposals coming from operations as to modifications of equipment or technique.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If there were such a department its usefulness would be doubtful. It would be inundated by suggestions coming from uncritical enthusiasts and these suggestions would have to be filtered by stupid clerks. It takes a high degree of intelligence to discern the germ of a fruitful idea in a clumsily worded, and perhaps inaccurately stated, proposal. First-class minds are not economically employed in reading a correspondence that is 99 per cent trash.

### *LIAISON:*

Eventually, however, the proposal finds its way to an experimental department. From this department the reply is more sympathetic but is, perhaps for that very reason, the more depressing. What is suggested is sound, it would mean improvement. But the device is in quantity production (or the training manual is being printed by the million) and the foreseen benefit would not be worth the time and money that would be lost if the device or technique were to be modified. This is final.

Now it is important to note that the ultimate judgment is not 'good' or 'worthless' but is 'not good enough', i.e. relative. Who is competent to make this estimate? In the first instance are those on operations? No matter how imaginative and critical experimenters and designers may be, ultimate proof of utility will always be in the hands of the user. He, however, is incompetent to assess the cost of any modification. If he could express enhanced utility in a percentage, production engineers could also express the loss entailed by the modification as a percentage and a child could solve the equation. Unfortunately it seems that only those who have a specialized laboratory training are competent to conduct controlled experiments such as yield valid, numerical results. For lack of such training observations are improperly controlled and the conclusions are based on impressions which vary with the sanguineness of the observer. Clearly investigation ought to be made by trained experimenters who could have the services of technically trained users. But how much weight would the report of the trained experimenter carry? He is not necessarily a man of high military rank or civilian reputation and the decision rests ultimately with someone of cabinet or general's rank. This, however, is the problem of utilization of the technician which will be discussed shortly.

It should not be supposed that this hypothetical example represents anything that is at all unusual. What I am trying to demonstrate is that, although hierarchical organization may be efficient in the planning of operations to give effect to some preformed policy,

## *VERTICAL AND PERIPHERAL*

modification of policy in the light of experience must be slow and uncertain, because accurate and detailed knowledge of the experience is not in the possession of the framers of policy. This is not a defect detectable in one service alone. It occurs in every service, civil or military, of every country and it is present, inevitably, in every big business as well. The reason is that reports of difficulties or suggestions for improvements from the operational base of the pyramid to its apex invariably have to pass through one or more 'filters'. The deleterious operation of the filter may be explained in this general statement: the wider the responsibility of any official the wider is the range of information on which his decisions must rest; the larger the bulk of reports reaching his office the more impossible it is for him to consider them personally, which makes inevitable a selection of the data submitted and this selection must be done by inferiors who are not supposed to exercise final judgment and yet are, by this system, forced to do so whenever they handle correspondence in accordance with set regulations or when they exclude some data in making a synopsis. The junior officer in my hypothetical example would probably end his crusade in a defeatist mood, cursing red-tape, cursing his superiors, cursing the stupidity of the official mind. (Which shews the relevance of this discussion to the problem of morale.) But he would be wrong: there may have been no obstructiveness, but everywhere a sincere desire to do one's best. The fault is inherent in all large-scale organization. Recently a friend of mine, who came from private life to be second in command of an office that soon reached large proportions, told me that at first he and his chief could handle personally all the reports that came in but soon it became impossible; juniors had to make digests; they knew they were no longer in possession of all relevant facts but they could do nothing about it; they knew the evil in advance yet they saw it grow under their eyes, powerless to stop it. No wonder the word 'monstrous' has two meanings.

The critic is prone to exclaim, 'Cut the red-tape!' If that means

### *'RED TAPE'*

to abolish officiousness, departmentalism and petty obstructiveness, the value of such reforms is obvious. But if this means, as it so often does, that regulations should be abolished, the suggestion is nihilistic. Before effort can be concerted there must be organization, when organizations become large they inevitably become inelastic. But without organization there is chaos and it is better to have a rigid system than none at all. If more people realized that large organizations were inevitably slow in changing to meet new conditions, that the enemy must suffer from the same disability, there might be less discouragement than evidence of slowness in our war effort now produces. Similarly, those who discern that capitalism is a faulty system for regulation of production and distribution and would seek to abolish it are like those who would abolish red-tape. Russia tried that experiment and had soon to abandon it and other doctrinaire 'reforms'. There are no short-cuts to the millennium.

There is another principle involved in the correlation of national and large business activities. This is centralization, which can be dealt with more briefly. Every government service, civil or military, and every branch of a business combine is a pyramid; the apices of these pyramids meet at a centre where an ultimate authority that rules them all resides. The problem here is to correlate the activities within all the pyramids. It is another problem of liaison. Again in theory it is possible to envisage correlation of activities as a result of carefully prepared plans elaborated by the cabinet, a supreme war council, or the central board of directors. But, again, this is an organization adapted for dealing with what has been already foreseen but not for coping with new problems. If a new need arises at the operational periphery of one service and the means for satisfaction of that need exist at the periphery of another service, centralization of communication means that the central authority must contain a clearing house for information as well as exercise direction in planning. Such a system is bound to be both cumbrous and inefficient.

In the first place there will inevitably be filters on the lines from the periphery to the centre. If to avoid these there is no selection or summarizing of data during their transmission, then a second difficulty arises. There has to be a duplication at the centre of the records made at the periphery as well as a central staff of experts to understand the data as knowledgeable as those at the periphery. Such duplication is possible in a small organization when it resides in the head of a manager who 'knows the business'. But when the business grows to such a size that one man can no longer see everything that is going on, there must be departmental sub-managers who act as filters or there must be detailed paper reports that go to the manager's office. In the latter case the filter is in that office and the selection of material to be laid before the manager will be intelligent only if the clerk who makes it has the technical knowledge and judgment of the men who make the original reports.

One way of avoiding this central filtration, or of reducing its labour, is to have reports sent in with a number of duplicates, the latter being distributable to other departments whose operations have to be correlated with that of the department making the first report. This is the reason for the enormous volume of paper work that burdens the lives of officers in all services. It is, naturally, resented, but without it there could be no liaison at all. If the reader is sceptical as to the necessity for paper records being so numerous, let him think of a simple example. A housekeeper retains in her head a record of her supplies in larder and linen cupboard, the wear and tear of furnishings, the work she has already done and of the jobs still to do. Now imagine that this housekeeper has to regulate the purchases, the repairs, the cooking, the cleaning and so on for a thousand houses. A thousand cooks and housemaids cannot report each day to her in person, their activities cannot be correlated, nor their relative needs adjusted, unless each makes a daily written report. Now, even if this super-housekeeper has a technical knowledge of cooking, cleaning and mending (which is improbable, for her abilities should be



## *EXPERTS*

primarily those of a financier or executive rather than of an operator) she will not know local conditions in the thousand different regions where the houses are situated. Her central staff must therefore include experts both in technical household duties and in local conditions. Not only will the volume of paper reports be monstrous but the staff that copes with it at the centre must well nigh duplicate that at the periphery if it is to be handled intelligently.

An excellent example of the futility of centralized control is given in the control by the Treasury of unusual expenditures by other government departments. A novel expenditure is requested in order to meet a real, or fancied, need that has arisen since the last budget. The only possible judge as to the reality or the gravity of the need is one conversant with the problems in the field where the money would be spent, in other words, an expert. Treasury judgment is therefore, either quite unintelligent or else it is made on the advice of a Treasury official who is an expert in the field in question. So, to make competent judgments, the Treasury must maintain a staff of experts duplicating those working for all other departments, civil and military. There is no escape from this dilemma if there is to be centralized control and if the system is to be adaptable. Naturally there is no such duplicate set of experts and, inevitably, Treasury decisions on such requests are arbitrary and unintelligent. One result is a departmental hostility that is, probably, an important factor in the production and maintenance of the disease of departmentalism which will be discussed shortly.

The obvious way out of this dilemma is decentralization, but then another complication arises. Cumbersome though it may be, the central authority nevertheless provides some possibility of liaison between one department and another. With decentralization that possibility ends and another must be found. This may be accomplished by the appointment of a liaison officer, to communicate the experience and needs of two departments which overlap in their activities, who has sufficient technical knowledge in the field of each department to

## *LIAISON OFFICERS*

interpret it to the other. This is the reason why an Army officer may be seconded to the Air Force in order to learn to fly. Similarly, although in an entirely different field, the successful research physiologist to-day is apt to be either an expert electrical engineer or an expert chemist. In the world of economics the distributive services, the middlemen and shopkeepers, perform the function of liaison. One of the first mistakes which a democracy makes in turning to authoritarianism, as it must in war-time, is to suppose that distributors are less important than producers. They are redundant in primitive, self-contained villages, but they become more and more essential as the economic community grows. The reformer who would abolish the middleman is simply myopic, but he who would regulate the distributor's wages may not be.

The task of maintaining liaison between any two departments by employing the services of a dually trained technician is simple. But the trouble is that there are many more than two departments, no matter whether we are dealing with government services or business combines. The activities of each are bound sooner or later to overlap those of all the others. If, then, liaison is to be accomplished through special officers, the number required will mount, as the number of departments increases, according to a formula which a mathematician could furnish but which I am incompetent to give—whatever it may be it represents a dizzy rate of progression. In the field of economics a servant appears, lured by money that can be made when a service is required. Thus the more complicated is the economics of any country or, indeed, of the world, the larger is the number of those engaged in financing liaison.

There is a myth that will probably take a lot of killing, namely that of the efficiency of 'big business'. Competition between many small firms is held to be wasteful and this waste may be eliminated by the 'rationalization' of combined management. Certainly the wastefulness of competition is excluded (as is also its incentive), but the weaknesses of large-scale organization then appear, for the simple

### *'RATIONALIZATION'*

reason that they are inevitable. An attempt is made to obviate the evils of hierarchical organization by compromising with decentralization. Then liaison between subsidiaries is absent. Two examples will illustrate this. Two subsidiaries tendered against each other for a foreign contract for more than six months before this ruinous rivalry was discovered. It was not in the interest of the foreign consumer to disclose to either subsidiary the name of its competitor or even the country of its domicile. The competition could have been avoided only if every subsidiary made detailed reports to every other subsidiary of the activities of its sale department, which would involve an exasperating, if not intolerable, amount of paper work. The other example is of a not too scrupulous middleman who made a tidy profit by buying a commodity in one office, walking downstairs and selling it in another office of the same company, and all in a matter of twenty minutes. He performed a liaison service but he was overpaid. A friend who was for years in one of our military services and then joined the staff of one of the biggest businesses in England—or indeed in the world—told me that, so far as he could see, the government service was the more efficient. Their faults were the same but, presumably, the will to serve was stronger when it was the country that was to gain. Loyalty is a stronger motive than is money.

If big business has this inefficiency, why is the fact not notorious? The answer is that a wrong measure of efficiency is applied. Big business makes money when the small business fails. But this profit comes from monopoly. If a business is big enough it can, legally or illegally, control the price at which it buys and at which it sells. With its reserves (including credit with the banks) it can during a period of depression carry on business at a loss and outlive its small competitors, thus perfecting its monopoly. The Post Office is frequently cited as a case of a large organization that is efficient and is a government institution to boot. Its success could really be taken as an example to illustrate the argument I have been making. In the first place the vast bulk of its problems can be accurately foreseen and

## *'RATIONALIZATION'*

therefore it performs just those functions which can be efficiently executed by a centralized hierarchical organization. When it took over telegraphy it did not have to substitute the transmission of telegrams for that of letters. It could cope with the former by mere additions to its staff and similarly with the adoption of telephone and wireless services. Secondly, the Post Office is a monopoly which, through the government, can control the price of its services absolutely and, owing to its size as a consumer, can very largely control the price at which it buys materials and labour (the latter getting none too much).

It seems then that large organizations are necessarily inefficient. But should this shock us, make us despair of our own intelligence or of that of mankind in general?<sup>1</sup> The function of organization is so to correlate the activities of a group of people as to weld them into a unit. This is nothing more nor less than the correlation of functions within a body which makes it into an organism biologically. Indeed some biologists have claimed that social units ought to be called organisms. The first problem solved by nature in the course of evolution was an organization (through the mediation of a nervous system) which was capable of unifying bodily functions to meet a limited number of routine circumstances. If a new situation was encountered, so much the worse for that animal. This simple creature is governed by instinct, but, being slowly educable, may have deeply ingrained habits added to his equipment of routine capacities. The

<sup>1</sup> We may derive some comfort from the following. It is generally, and probably rightly, stated that the German machine is more efficient than is ours in many respects. But at what cost? Germans fit more slickly into a hierarchical organization than do we. That is the price of individual liberty. In their zeal for efficiency they have discovered the need for liaison officers more than we have; or, at least, they have many more officials. At a German bankers' congress, held some years before the Nazis came into power, it was stated that there were twice as many government officials in Germany as in Great Britain although the German population was only half as large again. Since the government under the Nazis has encroached more and more on private enterprise it is safe to assume that the disproportion is now even greater. If an organization is large enough and if liaison is complete a top-heavy structure is bound to develop, as is mathematically demonstrable.

## PHYSIOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

capacity to modify behaviour quickly to meet the exigencies of new emergencies with new methods of attack or defence is something that appears only among the monkeys and apes and reaches what we naturally regard as its complete development in man alone. It took many millions of years for the central nervous system to develop to the point where co-ordination of hand and eye such as monkeys enjoy could appear. More millions of years went to evolution of the brain which is the mechanism of man's intelligence—the intelligence which is signalized by versatility. Nature, in the course of this evolution, has plumped for centralization as against decentralization, although indications of the latter are apparent to the physiologist. The central nervous system, whose function is fundamentally that of intercommunication, operates on the hierarchical basis, with a pyramiding of controls from the spinal up to the brain level. It is in the brain that liaison is localized, but it takes a lot of 'officials' to accomplish it.

There are 12,000 million cells in the average human brain and of these 9000 million are in the cerebral cortex with which we do our thinking. The total 'office staff' is therefore six times the population of the world (2000 million). If these cells were interconnected only in pairs, there would be about  $10^{2,783,000}$  different pathways. 'During a few minutes of intense cortical activity the number of interneuronic connections actually made (counting also those that are activated more than once in different associated patterns) may well be as great as the total number of atoms in the solar system' (*Brains of Rats and Men*, C. Judson Herrick, p. 9).

The voluntary muscles of the body may be compared to the workmen in a factory or the soldiers in the field if the brain is the office or the staff. When, as a result of taking thought, we make a movement involving all the voluntary muscles of the body, approximately twenty-six times as many brain cells are involved as there are muscle fibres (the ultimate muscle unit) to perform the task. This is like twenty-six staff officers to one soldier in the field or twenty-six managers to one workman.

## PHYSIOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

Civilized man has been engaged on the task of making a social unit only for a few thousand years. He can expect to fabricate a social organization that will be adaptable, as the individual man is adaptable, only when he has developed a liaison system comparable in its intricacy with that of the individual human brain. Biologically his progress along the line of social evolution is really prodigiously rapid. The moral of it all is that we should not be disheartened by the stupidities of large organizations, we should make the best of an imperfect world and not make matters worse by trying to solve overnight the kind of problem which, in another field, it has taken nature millions of years to master.

Nevertheless nature does give us one hint about organization which might be used to hasten social evolution. As I have said the organization of the central nervous system for routine responses is purely of the hierarchical type. But, *pari passu* with the appearance and evolution of versatility in response, another principle becomes evident. There grows down from the cerebral cortex of the brain a pair of pathways into the spinal cord which by-pass the higher levels one by one. In the lower mammals these pyramidal tracts, as they are called, just get into the spinal cord and no more, but, paralleling increase of intelligence, they extend farther and farther until, in man, they run right to the bottom of the spinal cord. This means that one of the mammals may be able to place his fore-foot in some position dictated from the brain while his hind-foot is still controlled only by a general reflex co-ordination. (Reflexly the hind-foot can follow the fore-foot of that side accurately and this may be why the footprint of the hind-foot in so many wild animals coincides with that of the fore-foot. Discrimination (based probably on vision) can regulate the movement of the fore-foot and the hind one follows its brother slavishly.) A man can learn to hold a pencil with his toes and write, which would be completely impossible without pyramidal tract control of the legs. Just what the meaning of this allegory should be for him who would improve organization I am not prepared to suggest, but

## *CUTTING RED TAPE*

I feel confident it involves a valuable principle. Anyone hoping to become an innovator in executive work might do worse than spend a few years in studying the organization of the central nervous system. If he pondered over the many principles there exhibited he might gain useful hints.

So far I have discussed limitations in organization that are inherent and, therefore, must be universal. We may rest assured that the enemy has similar trials and probably takes them no more philosophically than we do. In the novels and plays of all countries the defects of the official mind are pilloried. But there remain to be discussed other factors that are not inevitably operating to hamper the efficiency of groups, factors which flow from the characters of officials—the virtues of the good official and the vices which the bad one is prone to develop. Whether the psychologist (as a biologist) has a right to talk about organization in the abstract may be open to dispute. But there can be no doubt that the problem of character belongs to psychology—which does not preclude the intelligent lay observer from drawing general conclusions of value. (Trotter, whose work I have quoted so freely, was not a professional psychologist.)

In spite of all the reasons I have urged to prove that large-scale organizations are rigid and unadaptable, the fact remains that they can change their habits, can be modified; the miracle does happen. How is this accomplished? It would seem that it is brought about by individuals and in spite of the system. These are officials who treat rules as vague guides for conduct of their duties but not as regulations that should be followed to the letter. In other words they cut the red-tape. They are inspired by zeal for the country they serve rather than by loyalty to the traditions of the department in which they work. They take orders, of course, but they are prepared to make up others without consulting a manual and they have the authority to see that these novel orders are carried out. In other words they are ready to exercise leadership, risking loss of promotion

### *CUTTING RED TAPE*

or facing the possibility of dismissal with equanimity. The problem of the psychologist is twofold, to identify the factors which cause deterioration in the character of those in the machine—the diseases of officialdom—and to study the methods by which candidates can be chosen and trained so that they may escape or surmount the perils besetting the soul of him who enters government service, either civil or military.



## CHAPTER 9

### DEPARTMENTALISM AND CAREERISM

THE diseases of officialdom are assignable to two general causes, a perversion of loyalty and the temptations which service life offers to those of weak character.

Departmentalism is a disease of loyalty. If a number of people are working together at a common task they will inevitably tend to form a group that has pride in itself, gathers what traditions it may and seeks to make itself superior to other similar groups. This *esprit de corps* has always been held to be useful in bringing out the potential energies and abilities of men, and in the Army the maintenance of the regimental system is considered essential for the development of morale. On the other hand the Royal Air Force has always shifted its officers constantly about from station to station and from squadron to squadron, and the morale of the Royal Air Force has become legendary even during its short life. So the importance for morale of focusing loyalty in a small group is probably greatly exaggerated. (It is a good example of a lay psychological generalization, accepted as axiomatic but based on no controlled observations.) So long as rivalry between services is an emulation in service to the state no harm is done and probably only good comes out of it. Similarly, if there is a struggle for survival, its results may be valuable. But, when there is competition for power and privilege, the evils of departmentalism appear and may become disastrous.

A good example of the value of localized loyalty in a struggle for survival is given by the history of the Royal Air Force. It was formed out of units in the Army and Navy during the last war when it was felt that aviation was sufficiently important to be centralized in a service of its own. Another military innovation of that period was mechanized warfare; it, too, had its special units within the Army,

### *FOCALIZED LOYALTIES: GOOD AND BAD*

but they were not given the status of an independent service. And what have been the results? After the war came disarmament and an orgy of economy. All services, civil and military, struggled for survival, squabbling over the pittances available. There was no Mechanized Warfare Service to press its claims before the cabinet; so there was available for the development of tanks only what could be spared when the more conventional needs of the Army had been met in a niggardly way. Is it surprising that, although we invented the tank and, it is said, were the innovators in the tactics now used by the enemy, yet we have followed the German rather than led him in tank evolution during this war? The Royal Air Force, however, could speak for itself. Although it was reduced to a handful of squadrons, there were sufficient appropriations for aeroplane design to be encouraged. In this war the Germans have had to follow behind us in further evolution, indeed it is doubtful whether even now they have produced a fighter that is as good as that with which we began.

Service loyalty which shews itself in struggle for survival and in emulation in service of the state is a good thing and, if there was a sharp and obvious line dividing these motives from those which operate for the aggrandizement of the department as such, this loyalty would probably operate always as a virtue. After all, government officials are not conscious traitors, they enter any service with an ambition to serve the state and, when they gradually deteriorate into departmentalists, they do not realize that their loyalties have changed from being national to being parochial. This is because the valuable kind of departmental loyalty is used as a rationalization to cover those activities or actions which benefit the department at the expense of the state. The argument is all too facile. The department was established and operates for the performance of a function essential in the life of the nation. (True.) The health of the body politic therefore depends on the vitality of this department. (Also true.) Our job is not to run the whole state but to perform the task assigned to us, therefore the stronger we can make our department, the more

## THE DEPARTMENTAL CONSCIENCE

patriotic are our efforts. It is here that the logic comes unstuck. If the strength of the department is used only in greater efficiency in service to the nation, the argument would be sound except in so far as it might mean that a disproportionate amount of the national energy might be drained into this particular service. But, unfortunately, there is always a tendency for the aggrandizement of the department to become an end in itself; the service in question is set up as an *imperium in imperio*. Even when this tendency has become obvious, another rationalization steps in, one the truth of which it is difficult to gainsay. All departments are rivals: they have to compete for appropriations and they have to compete for authority in fields where the operations of different services overlap. If we claim only our just share, the others will claim more and in the end we shall get less than our just due. Therefore we must strive to get all we can. Unless we obstruct our competitors, they will take to themselves that which rightly belongs to us; if we co-operate with them, they will win the fruits of our labours. Liaison would be our undoing.

This is not, of course, a published system of ethics, it is not even a tradition which is explained to every neophyte when he enters a service. It is, probably, never fully conscious in the mind of any one official. It is more of an atmosphere, an ethical bias that is developed and perpetuated by example rather than by precept. Naturally it exists side by side with an ethic based on true patriotism with which it is in conflict. None but wilful traitors—assuming the public servant to have a certain minimum of intelligence—could be a pure departmentalist any more than a brigand could be loyal to his band without knowing that he was breaking the law. But, as has been argued earlier, we all tend to adopt the morals of those with whom we are in immediate contact, and perhaps the greatest weakness of the system lies in the opportunity which departmentalism gives small men to indulge the meaner sides of their characters.

The peccant public servant is not consciously dishonest nor is he consciously a traitor, but the nature of his employment, and parti-

## OBSTRUCTIONISM AND AMBITION

cularly the atmosphere of inter-departmental rivalry, facilitate a self-seeking that easily gets out of step with public service. He enters the employ of the state in order to make a living, within the limits of his ambition to make a career, and with a more or less conscious desire to serve the nation. The third motive is often in conflict with the first two and, when the conflict is obvious, patriotism will conquer. He will, for instance, not take bribes that are, unequivocally, bribes. But rationalization is so easy. If he is lazy, it is simpler to look up a rule and make the case fit it, than to think out a solution that can fit the spirit of the rules while evading their letter. So he becomes a willing slave to red-tape. If a citizen of greater wealth or of higher social status than himself enters the department on business, he can take to himself the authority of the department as a whole—even the power of the Crown—to snub the man who is his superior outside the office. Thus obstructionism, which feeds his vanity, is a maintenance of the prestige of the department.

This pettiness is an exhibition at a low level of what becomes careerism at a higher one—the seeking of power for the love of exercising it rather than as an opportunity for greater service. Promotion, particularly at lower levels, follows length of service *provided* the aspirant makes no mistakes. The exercise of initiative is always hazardous: one may make an error of judgment or one may take a decision that, technically, is in the province of a superior who is jealous of his authority. Here, again, a premium is put on following rules rather than the use of intelligence.

Promotion, particularly at higher levels, rests on the importance of the work which passes through the hands of the official. There are three standards which may be applied in measuring its value. The first, which ought to be the only one, is the usefulness of the work, actually and potentially, to the whole community. Unfortunately there are in practice two other foot-rules used. According to establishment regulations the rank of the official is connected with the number of assistants he has; if the bulk of work increases he must

## *LOYALTIES IN CIVIL AND MILITARY SERVICES*

have more assistants and, automatically, his status, his salary and the amenities of employment advance. This system, which operates with the greater regularity in the civil services, imposes on the official a great temptation. The more he complicates his duties, the larger is the amount of paper work that must be done, the larger the number of clerks needed to handle it, and, therefore, the more certainty of advancement. This hardly puts a premium on simplification of procedure in government offices. The other means of measuring an official's usefulness is what he accomplishes for and in his department. In working for the government he works for the department; in working for the department he works for his immediate superiors. It is they who recommend him for promotion. Would not a chief be more than human if he failed to select for promotion the man who had been most useful to him? Naturally this puts a premium on subtle flattery, discreet servility and intrigue.

All these evils result from putting self-interest or departmental interest before the national weal. They therefore tend to be more flagrant in the civil than in the military services, because in the latter direct service to the Crown is inevitably stressed. The fighting man is prepared to die for King and Country, not for the Army, the Navy, or the Air Force. His brother in a civil service, being asked for a lesser sacrifice, is less apt to scrutinize the direction of the loyalty that drives him to do more than merely earn his wages. When war breaks out the conditions of employment of the soldier, sailor or airman change radically; what were previously merely exercises become actual battles. No matter how selfish or parochial his interests were previously they are now inevitably directed towards more distant and more inspiring goals. But the work of the civil servant has no alteration in kind with the appearance of war: he goes on doing just what he was doing before although he may have to do more of it. If he had been a conscious rogue, the war might bring reform. But he was not: he always thought he was doing his duty. So, with the war, his conscience bids him merely to work harder

## AMBITION FOR MONEY OR POWER

at what he had been doing before. Is it any wonder that the outsider, unblinded by the civil servant's rationalizations, exclaims that Whitehall doesn't yet know that there is a war on?

We cannot arrive at any judgment about these problems that is either charitable or accurate unless we realize that a crucial factor is rationalization—intellectual dishonesty, if you will, but certainly not conscious treason or conscious cheating. It is difficult to camouflage a bribe of money, and it is hard to take cash out of the till without knowing that one is stealing. But who is to say, except in the case of rare, flagrant examples of one or the other, just where an altruistic desire for larger opportunity of service ends and a purely selfish careerism begins? The difficulty of answering this question has a bearing on the problem of state control of capital as against private enterprise.

The analogies between businesses and government services are close. The *raison d'être* of each is public service (the business which performs no function in the community is predatory; it is either illegal or laws are passed to make it such). British bankers, for instance, are at least as conscious of their obligations to the nation in their performance of a liaison function and the profits of banking, when measured in terms of the turn-over taxed to provide the profit, are so small as to be almost ludicrous. There is a similar secrecy and obstructionism in competition between firms as between departments whose fields overlap. Just as regulations are used to cloak such operations in the latter, so in the former the word rather than the spirit of contracts may be manipulated to cover sharp practice. But with all these analogies, there is one big difference. The reward for success in business is an obvious one—money. In the services this is a secondary consideration. A civil servant, by the terms of his employment, has a guaranteed salary and pension which he is certain to get so long as he spends a certain number of hours at his desk going through the motions of work and disobeys no rules. No initiative and no exercise of intelligence is required of him as a

## *AMBITION FOR MONEY OR POWER*

condition of his continued employment. He can even gain promotion under these conditions on the basis of seniority. This spells security but not affluence. Indeed large monetary rewards are impossible in any government service. The rewards for getting on are increased prestige and power. Which type of reward for successful service is the better one?

This question should, I think, be put in another and less vague form: Which type of reward is least likely to lead to uncontrollable abuses? If human nature were perfect there would be no such questions raised: given complete altruism and optimum intelligence any system can be made to work and the actual operation of all systems would probably be much alike. For instance, a wholly benevolent despot, ruling his people in their interest, would allow free speech, he would set up machinery for learning the state of public opinion that was at least as efficient as the ballot, he would endeavour in his legislation never to go materially ahead of public opinion (otherwise the people would be unable to adapt themselves to it comfortably and efficiently) and he would thus produce the functional equivalent of a democracy led by an ideal statesman as prime minister. So the question is: Is money or power as a reward for public service the more liable to uncontrollable abuse?

The capitalist system, i.e. the system of private enterprise in business as opposed to state ownership of all capital, may lead to large amounts of money coming into the hands of private individuals who can spend it as they like. How can they spend it? There are only a limited number of ways. The rich man's capacity to raise his personal standard of comfort is limited because purely personal comforts are limited in number and range. Quite a moderate income will give a man everything that he can enjoy by and for himself alone. Beyond this he can spend his money on hospitality, on charity or in ostentatious display. All money thus spent goes into circulation, supports those in his employ and eventually pays for its proportion of national production. If the money were put into circulation by

a government agency it is unlikely that it would get there any quicker. It might, however, flow through different channels and it might be more in the national interest for this channel rather than that to be employed. Ought the capitalist to exercise this choice? The same question arises in connection with investment of unspent surplus. It is the capitalist who decides what industry will be assisted, which one left to starve for lack of capital. In each case, it may be held, a decision of national importance is left in the hands of a private individual. This seems wrong, it feels 'undemocratic', is it not the cause of our economic ills? Very possibly, but what is the alternative?

Under a socialist system the allocation of this money would be in the hands of civil servants. Instead of a board of directors with its chairman there would be a group of Treasury (or other) officials with its chairman. How will the characters of those in the capitalist and the socialist bodies differ? The company director is chosen because he understands management and finance, which he has proved by making money. The civil servant will be chosen because he understands management and finance, which he has proved by getting on in the service. Now either there will be no essential difference in the characters and abilities of the two groups—in which case a change-over from one system to the other has made no difference—or else one group will be better than the other because avarice is a more, or a less, dangerous spur than careerism. In each group the motive of public service would be the same in quality. Its quantity would depend on the degree to which it might be subordinated to avarice or careerism. Money is something that can be measured, it can be taxed, there can be legislation to control the way it can be spent or invested. But there is no one who can measure careerism because it is a motive and motives are never pure. It is therefore controllable by public opinion—just as the capitalist is.

The invulnerability of the careerist is demonstrated by the following example. A friend of mine, temporarily employed in an important



## *AMBITION FOR MONEY OR POWER*

government office which had to do with military equipment, said to me that they could get nowhere in his department because at the head of it was a permanent civil servant who was hoping for a knighthood. So he refused to back any proposal that might ruffle a politician. Of course I do not know whether it was true or not. But, if true, how could it be proved unless the department head chose to admit guilt? The motive might not even have been fully conscious, being largely the outcome of an ingrained habit. If, however, the allegation had been that the miscreant refused to allow the development of a new type of equipment because he held shares in the company making the existing type, proof or disproof of the existence of this motive would be simple.

The diseases to which officialdom is liable may, in some measure, be curbed by changes in organization and the rules of procedure. Regulations should, indeed, be revised, or rewritten, much more often than they are. But, essentially, the trouble lies in character defects which are given a greater opportunity for development in official than in private life. Public administrators should have too broad a moral outlook to be loyal only to an immediate group or to be governed by its moral sanctions; they should be eager to assume responsibility rather than afraid of it; and they should be intelligent enough to realize the pitfalls and temptations they are liable to meet. How are these qualities to be discovered and cultivated?

*LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC SERVICE*

IN discussing this problem one fact should be clearly recognized: leadership always involves privilege, and attempts to divorce the two lead to trouble. There are several reasons for this nexus. The first is merely an example of the general principle of division of labour. Only in a small community can a man leave the plough to attend to public duties or perform such functions in his spare time. Because in large communities the management of state business is a whole time job, the livelihood of the official must be given him by the labours of others. But, secondly, his needs are not so simple as those of day labourers. His task is to think rather than to do, to direct the labour of others rather than to work himself. Thinking cannot be turned off and on like a tap; it demands leisure in which one may ruminate over problems. A good executive so arranges the work of his department that there is absolutely nothing of a routine nature left for him to do; he is therefore always free to deal with any problems that arise. If he is given insufficient staff such freedom is impossible and he may be so harried by detail that he cannot give sufficient attention to matters of policy. If he has the staff and organizes his department properly a visitor may always find him free and unthinkingly say he is lazy. I have never known a good executive who was not accused of laziness by someone sooner or later. From the point of view of either the manual worker or the quill-driver, the good executive is a drone, a privileged loafer.

But privileges necessary for the efficient performance of his highly specialized task do not end with freedom from routine. Physical discomforts such as cold and noises may be unpleasant for a manual or routine worker but, unless excessive, they do not grievously interfere with his work. The man who is trying to think may, however,

## *LEADERSHIP AND PRIVILEGE*

be seriously distracted by them. Similarly, fatigue should be eliminated from the life of the important executive in so far as that is possible. No one would have the prime minister waste time and energy in travelling third class and possibly having to stand up for a long journey. It is taken for granted that his private car is not a luxury but a necessity. Yet it is not always realized that the same principle must apply at less exalted levels of authority. Then there is another not unimportant factor to be reckoned with. No two brain workers think best in the same environment. One man may solve his problem best when sitting at his desk, staring at his blotter and 'doing nothing'. Another may find his answer quickest if he goes for a walk or takes it with him to a golf links. If either departmental regulations or public opinion make this kind of liberty impossible, his efficiency is in some measure reduced.

The optimum conditions for efficiency in the specialized labour of high officials are of a kind that are popularly associated with the life of an idle, privileged class. So, one would suppose, they would not be seen in a 'classless' society. But this is not true. In Russia it was soon learnt that efficiency is securable only when responsibility is coupled with privilege and an aristocracy of brain workers has grown up. And the privileges of higher officials in Germany are notorious. The contrast in standard of comfort between the governed and their governors is striking; why is it tolerated? There is, perhaps, some vague intuition of the connection between efficiency in thinking and privilege. But there is a more important factor than this. A ruler is, inevitably, a representative of those whom he governs, a statement which holds for groups of all kinds and sizes. As a consequence of this the appearance and style of living of the representative symbolizes the importance of the group of which he stands as a symbol. If a prime minister began life in a machine shop his union would be outraged if he appeared publicly in a boiler suit. Pride is, rather, taken in the fact that one of them now looks, acts and lives like one of the nobs.

## *INEVITABILITY OF A RULING CLASS*

That privilege is tacitly assumed to go with authority is illustrated in the following anecdote. It was narrated (on the wireless? in a daily paper?) by one who was an enthusiast for the present Russian régime. It was told ostensibly to illustrate Stalin's humility. The dictator wished to consult a book which was to be found only in a public (i.e. state) library. He sent a messenger to get it. Now it happened that there was a rule that such volumes could not be kept out of the library overnight, a rule so absolute that it had never been broken. Nightfall came and Stalin had not finished his reading, so he sent his messenger to ask if he might keep the book out for one night, a request which was duly granted. Now this story has no point at all unless it is assumed that a dictator has the privilege of being above the law. That Stalin assumed that he might at least hope that he had this privilege is shewn by his making the request. The anecdote illustrates politeness, not humility, and it demonstrates that privilege is assumed to go with authority but that good manners are not.

The importance for our problem of the association of privilege with authority is that it leads inevitably to the formation of a privileged ruling class. People who work, feed, travel, play and rest in different ways and with different standards cannot associate with each other socially except in emergencies. Routines of living determine the routine of social contacts, and differences in standards of living inevitably lead to social layering. This layering need not be rigid, there can be much overlap and filtering from one level to those above and below, but the tendency, as a tendency, is relentless. The more the ruling class becomes class-conscious, the more will it on the one hand develop its own ethical standard—such, for instance, as playing the game according to the rules of the class rather than in accordance with the rules that are printed, which may give the official moral support in being patriotic rather than departmental in his decisions—and the more will it tend to regard its privileges as rights belonging to the class rather than to office. These good and

## SELECTING THE RULERS

bad tendencies being inevitable, the best system will be that which tends to create a dominant feeling of responsibility to the state as a whole with a minimum of belief in rights accruing to the class as such.

How is such a class to be recruited and trained? So far as I know there are only three different systems that have ever been tried. One is that of a purely hereditary ruling class. With this there is a rigid caste system that is accepted like the weather: the cobbler thinks of himself or of his brother as a possible official no more than with us a lawyer thinks of making his own boots. This ruling class develops its moral code—*noblesse oblige*—but, human nature being what it is, it seems inevitably to stress its class 'rights' and so to extend them that the resultant abuses are intolerable. Eventually there is revolution. When this has been successful the second system is tried, that is, the recruitment of officials from all classes but the previously ruling one. The third system is a compromise: higher officials are drawn chiefly from a class that enjoys a certain minimum of economic security, that has an acknowledged superior status socially (but with no legal recognition of this superiority) and that gives its sons a specialized 'class' type of education. The relative merits and potentialities for evil in these latter two systems must now be discussed.

Since there is in no modern society any selective breeding for intelligence and since, in the mutual attraction of the sexes, intelligence is a secondary element, it is safe to assume that the potential intelligence of children born in upper-class families is only slightly higher than that in the 'lower' strata. If, therefore, the children born in more favoured circumstances shew a demonstrably higher intellectual capacity, their superiority must be due to their better education, using that term in its widest sense so as to include family and social influence as well as formal school teaching. At first blush it would seem that the best system from the state's point of view would be to have universal free education, send the brighter lads to a free University and then pick the candidates for the higher ranks of the services from the graduating classes. The net being thus cast widely,

## UNIVERSAL FREE EDUCATION

the standard of intelligence recruited should be that much the higher. That has been, roughly, the French method, and experience in that country has shewn that the problem is not so simple as it looks. Remote results of the economic factor are chiefly responsible for the defects of this system. It begins quite early on with the necessity of poorer families to have their sons in gainful employment on reaching working age. Free education is not enough under an economic system that includes family dependence on the earnings of adolescents. This means that even if more intelligent youths then or later enter government service they must do so at the lower grades with little prospect of ever rising above the level of mere clerks. Secondly, civil service is, for the vast majority, a livelihood. This means that independence in judgment is liable to be warped by that inverse form of bribery, namely threat of dismissal by a hide-bound superior, than which there is nothing more likely to assist in developing departmentalism. Thirdly, the plums of office serve as temptations to those who can distribute them. The successful official is prone to assist the appointment or promotion of his son, his nephew, or the son of his friend. Then, apart from the economic factor, there is an absence of special education for what is going to be an official class, an education which would tend to develop a sense of special responsibility, of peculiar loyalty, national rather than parochial. These factors, operating in the political as well as the service worlds, were largely responsible for the tragic degeneration of French government.

In Germany and in Russia some of these mistakes have been avoided. Each country began by setting up a governing class—the Party—which exercised complete control, from which all officials are selected and which enjoys many privileges. In each country the Party membership represents a small minority in the total population, its numbers being about the same as those of the upper and upper middle classes in this country, or, perhaps, smaller. The recruitment of this aristocracy begins in childhood. Particularly in Germany, where the people are both great borrowers and thorough-

## *MINORITY PARTY RULE*

going in their planning, what is essentially the English Public School system has been adopted. Education is given a class differentiation. Even in childhood those are selected who seem to have in them the germ of leadership and they are given a special training, a special discipline, so as to develop a sense of responsibility, initiative and a class consciousness of superiority. In neither Germany nor in Russia is there any nonsense about withholding privileges from officials. (The Communists tried that briefly but found that it did not work. Now not merely does the Soviet official have comforts denied to the masses but his wife can go about in furs to which the working-man's wife could never aspire.)

At the moment this system seems to be working well in each country. But can it last? Against its success there is bound to come into operation a factor that has not yet had time to shew itself, or at least to develop its full effect. Whether it will wreck the system or not time alone can tell. As I have explained, the inevitable privileges of office force the association together of those who can enjoy similar amenities. This cuts right across family life unless wife and children can be brought into the circle. A naval officer, who visits his home only when on leave, could return to the hovel where his wife and children lived and join in their simplicity so long as he was on holiday; he could live two different lives. But this would be impossible for any official, civil or military, who resided at home when on duty. Give an official a sufficient salary and he can, of course, purchase for his wife and children the luxuries which are commensurate with his status. But what is to be the fate of the children? The father has gained his eminence through outstanding ability, which it is most unlikely will be inherited. (We must remember that the whole point and virtue of this system is that it recruits just that kind of ability which is rare and sporadic in its distribution.) He brings up his family to be accustomed to a standard of living that exceeds that of the average citizen by a big margin—this standard including all the reflected glory of the official as well as material

### *MINORITY PARTY RULE*

luxuries. Are his children to be exposed to open competition the result of which would almost certainly mean a slump to a much lower level? It should be borne in mind that this problem presents itself at the time when the official has reached the height of his career, that is at an age when he is no longer producing offspring but is thirsting for that kind of immortality that comes through the success of one's children.

Inevitably the official will try to guarantee for his sons a perpetuation of the status he has attained through one or both of two channels. He may use his influence to have him entered in a special school or he may see to it that on leaving school he is given some kind of a service appointment. It is possible to imagine this kind of influence being at work even though the father conscientiously believes that he is upholding the principle of equal opportunity for all. Examinations are such a notoriously bad single foot-rule for the measurement of ability that they must be supplemented by other, 'psychological' tests and interview. Indeed the Germans to-day have developed an elaborate system of such ancillary methods in selection of personnel. They insist, quite rightly, on the results of the psychological tests being interpreted, and both in this interpretation and in interview subjective factors enter in. Now, in so far as officialdom has become a class affair or has acquired class characteristics, to that extent will there be a belief in the minds of the scrutineers that the son of the worthy official is more likely to have the required character than is a lad brought up in the home of a wage slave. This belief is, indeed, well founded. The youth who comes from a family that is used to the exercise of authority, who, in the reflected glory of his father, has been treated with deference, as if he had the qualities of leadership, is not so likely to be frightened by responsibility as is one whose family has always been subservient. But the members of recruiting boards will probably go farther than this in favouring the candidature of the son of a friend. Everyone believes in heredity and few know its laws. It will be assumed that



### *MINORITY PARTY RULE*

the son has inherited his father's ability, and if the applicant does not exhibit his father's intelligence, this can be glossed over as an example of delayed development.

When order is emerging out of the anarchy which results from successful revolution, from the destruction of a ruling class, it is theoretically possible to have a classless selection of officials. But this creates a body of rulers without traditions, guided only by some doctrinaire theory. If the system survives, the original theory is bound to be supplemented and modified, first by experience which eliminates its impracticable features and second by the appearance of traditions. Under the impact of experience every single fundamental tenet of its original Marxist theory has been abandoned by the government in Russia. What were to have been basic principles in the structure of government have become ideals towards which the Communist Party now strives, or to which they mean to return, when prosperity has been gained. Then it will be possible, they hope, to abandon wages graded in proportion to service rather than in proportion to need, to do without private enterprise, to disallow trading in commodities, to ban private savings and the right to bequeath them, and so on. These modifications have come about quickly in the interests of survival: expedience had to displace theory. The modifications which result from tradition are bound to be slower in appearance but, perhaps, no less relentless in their operation. Equality of opportunity and family life seem to be incompatibles. This means either that one will destroy the other or a compromise will be reached in which opportunity is really not equal, while the ideal of service to the state will succeed in some measure in displacing parental solicitude. If there is a compromise, my guess is that the family will abandon less of its 'rights' than will the state simply because the family is a much older and more basic unit biologically than is the state.

Doctrinairism and rapid evolution belong to young states; compromise and stability belong to old civilizations. What of England,

## *A TRADITIONAL RULING CLASS*

the oldest political unit in the world? Here we see a conflict that has gone on for centuries between the principle of aristocracy and the principle of equality of opportunity, with the latter slowly gaining on the former but with the resultant change of outlook appearing so slowly that in every generation the compromise existing at the moment is accepted as the ideal by the vast majority of the people who are distrustful of the extremists who keep the fight going. What is the nature of the present compromise? This is a question that it is impossible to answer in any simple formula because the compromise is a process not a static constitution. The best one can do is to describe where the moving object would seem to be if it were at rest and what the forces are that seem to be determining the path of its movement. Anything like complete, and therefore accurate, descriptions could be given only by one who was at the same time an historian, an economist, and a sociologist or social psychologist. I am none of these, except, perhaps, the last. Further, any discussion of this problem would demand a space disproportionate to the size of this volume. So only a silhouette and not a proper picture can be given. It is easier to reconstruct what the immediate past seems to have been than to describe the present which, in its movement, contains an element of the not yet discernible future. So I shall begin by giving the outlines of what up to now has appeared to be the state of affairs and then mention the factors tending to modify that picture.

Originally, that is to say in feudal days, the aristocracy had complete legal control over the destinies of those subjected to them: government was entirely in their hands. (I include the ecclesiastical hierarchy with the aristocracy, perhaps improperly.) But this legal authority disappeared a long time ago except for the remnant that remains in the legislative power of the House of Lords. Never entirely hereditary, the tendency to put fresh blood into the Peerage has increased so that now those who have held their titles for many generations constitute a small minority. In modern days the ruling group, that is, the upper and upper middle classes, is a social and

## ECONOMIC PRIVILEGE

not a legally recognized caste. This means that its superiority is a matter of accepted tradition, not codified in any law, and that it remains an actually ruling class so long as, and in so far as, it succeeds in placing its sons in key positions in agriculture, industry, finance and the various government services, civil and military. Competition for these positions is open, but family backing gives an advantage to candidates coming from the upper classes. This advantage can be analysed into three factors which, naturally, interact in practice but must be considered separately. They are: economic power, social prestige, and the possession of a special educational system which is designed to develop the qualities of leadership.

The economic factor operates in three ways. The 'gentleman'<sup>1</sup> can afford a Public School and University education. He enjoys a standard of comfort which signalizes his membership in a caste that has social prestige, and, most important from the national point of view, his financial independence enables him to enter government service immune from the 'inverse bribe', threat of dismissal. So long as it is placed under no handicaps, any group that begins with a surplus of income over expenditure has a cumulative advantage in competition. Investment of the surplus means eventually an increase of income. If, on the other hand, there is a handicap imposed which reverses the differential advantage—as at the present time—then important social changes inevitably follow. These will be discussed in a moment.

Social prestige affects leadership in two ways. If authority to appoint the presumed future leader is in the hands of the governing class, its appointees are selected preponderantly from that class. If the selectors are reactionary die-hards, they will make social qualification paramount and grant admission to a socially inferior candidate only if his abilities are so flagrant as to constitute genius. If the selectors are, or try to be, unbiased, they will tend to balance against

<sup>1</sup> The fact that this is a legal occupation in Britain, while *rentier* would be the nearest French equivalent, bespeaks an interesting difference between the two cultures.

## *SOCIAL PRESTIGE*

relative inferiority of intelligence superiority in that vague characteristic 'leadership'. It is definitely their business to make this estimate, although it must always be a subjective one because 'leadership' cannot be measured. The traditions and special education of the Public School candidate make it probable that he will have this subtle quality in greater measure than will his competitor from a state-supported school. This may serve as a rationalization which excuses a judgment that is, as a matter of fact, a biased one. Another type of selection board is that which is dominated by pushful, lower middle class members whose presence on the board is of political origin. These men react negatively to social superiority, they tend to exclude the possibility that tradition and special education can be assets and to plump for 'brains' and pushfulness and, in their nominations, to compensate for the tyranny that the aristocracy and the plutocracy have exercised. Finally, of course, there may be selection by those of the lower classes. This occurs, for instance, when Regular Army sergeants choose men for cadetships from among the recruits in a conscript army. Here there is no hesitation. In their eyes the words 'officer' and 'gentleman' are indistinguishable synonyms. They recognize the gentleman by his accent, his gait, by his cheerful obedience and his recognition of authority that is unaccompanied by either subservience or a compensatory forwardness. After all the young heir has been a fag and has called a junior schoolmaster 'Sir' and lost nothing thereby; why should he worry? Left to themselves the sergeants would pick magnificent subalterns but would be apt to pass over the brains needed in future staff officers. Yet they may be valuable members of a selection team because they do not even know what schools the candidates came from; they have learned to detect the external evidences of self-reliance: they will reject those who lack these features and accept those who shew them regardless of their schools. They would be prepared to accept orders from those they choose and would dislike being placed under those whom they reject: that is good enough for them.

## *SOCIAL PRESTIGE*

Acceptance of leadership based on social prestige is a much more important factor. As I have said, the persistence of a ruling class in this country is based on its being part of a social structure upheld by tradition. The stronghold of this tradition is in the working classes: they like to be directed by the gentry and resent orders from upstarts, from men belonging to their own class, who 'do not know their place' or 'think they are as good as their betters'. This is a statement that would be disputed by many a left-wing intellectual but a phenomenon that is the despair of labour politicians, while it is a great puzzle to observers from newer civilizations.

Social stratification runs throughout all English society, but is strongest among the working population where the barriers between adjacent levels are most rigidly maintained. The hierarchy of the servants' hall is, of course, notorious. In industry social demarcations go with crafts: the wife of the skilled mechanic may not consort with the wife of the draftsman or the wife of the unskilled labourer. Investigation of the lives of factory operatives shews that there is a traditional hostility between the rank and file on the one hand and those of their numbers on the other hand who have been promoted to be foremen and head-girls. Communication between the two classes is reduced to the barest minimum: even saying 'Good morning' is resented as an intrusion. On the other hand any interest evinced by the management in the work or person of an employee is a matter of pride and boastful reminiscence. A young whipper-snapper just out of school or University who is flitting his way through the works in order to learn the business will, in spite of his technical ignorance, gain a co-operation from the employees that the highly competent foreman cannot achieve. The same tendency operates in the military services, where its existence constitutes a serious problem particularly in these days of rapid expansion when the demand for officers is so much greater than the supply of 'gentlemen'.

Once, when I was commenting on this problem in a lecture, a major in the Royal Artillery offered this example of the strength of

## *NATIONAL STABILITY AND SNOBBERY*

the inbred tendency of the Englishman to accept the principle of social stratification. He had in his battery a gunner who gave frequent trouble because he was so 'Bolshie'. At the time of the abdication crisis, he asked this gunner what he thought about it all. There was only one comment: 'I always did think he was too free and easy with the likes of us.' In spite of his vociferous political views and in spite of his indiscipline, he accepted something which he professed to despise.

This may not be so illogical as it appears to be. One may accept something of which one disapproves because it is part of a larger system to which loyalty is given. This is, of course, not thought out consciously: it is merely felt that, for instance, social stratification is of itself deplorable, but, if it is an integral part of the total national fabric to which loyalty is given, then it too should be accepted if not actively supported. Since, as I have explained, loyalty is quiescent until the group to which it is given is attacked, it follows that this apparent inconsistency will not appear until the country has to be defended. This argument explains why reliance may be placed during war on the loyalty even of those whose utterances have been treasonable during peace.

The disadvantages of snobbery—to call it by its meanest title—are too obvious to deserve comment. But has it any compensatory advantages? I think there are two, both considerable and neither a matter of general recognition. They are national stability and capacity for spontaneous organization in the face of an emergency. Let us examine each.

Whenever one is engaged in evaluating a national institution one has to bear in mind the principle that the greatest good to the greatest number is a prime consideration. It is like justice that can take no account of how cruel it may be to some individuals. The national stability accruing from social stratification is undoubtedly purchased at the expense of those whose abilities drive them into continual contact with people of a different level and with whom they can never

## THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

be comfortable. Since a ruling class gives form and expression to what a country stands for, it follows that they are, *par excellence*, the custodians of the national way of life. If mere ability can elevate a man into the ruling class—as money-making will in a plutocracy—and that man is not imbued with the national traditions so as to be coerced by them, then his actions may be disruptive of the national unity. How social stratification works to prevent this may be seen in an example. An immigrant East London Jew, with the outlook of a continental ghetto, makes a fortune. He may become a great man in his little community of fellow Jews but he finds that, in spite of his money, he does not count outside that community. There are things, he discovers, that money cannot buy: he is, for instance, not welcomed in Mayfair. But he is resolved that his children shall enjoy that which he has been unable to achieve. So he sends his sons to a Public School. There they have a thoroughly miserable time. Their accent is peculiar and their manners deplorable. No instructors in what is and isn't done are so cruelly efficient as the young. The rules of the game are learnt but are only consciously memorized formulae, not ingrained habits that assert themselves unreflectively. Their social contacts are marked by alternate cringing and compensatory hates: their ability may win them some respect but no friends, no affection in the quarters where they would most like to find it. What kindness they receive is prompted by pity—or so they think. From this prison house they never succeed in escaping. But the fate of their children is quite different. They have had an English Nanny.<sup>1</sup> They go to their father's school. They can say, 'My dad was in old Sproggins's House, you know' and it sounds quite natural. Their manners, their pleasures, their ethics are the same as those of their companions, and

<sup>1</sup> What a book could be written about the Nanny who at the same time teaches children what social distinctions are and at the same time gives them an affectionate understanding of another class, different but equally human! Quite similarly the American of the Southern states who has had a coloured 'Mammy' has no trouble in dealing with negroes. He calls them 'Nigger' and they sense the presence of a friendly protector. When a Northerner uses that word, it is an insult.

they are accepted. If their names and noses are peculiar and un-English, those are inconsiderable trifles. They *are* English because their habit of thought is English. Not only are they able to penetrate Mayfair if they wish, they are also welcomed in the highest councils. The avariciousness and sharp practice without which their forefathers could not have survived have disappeared. But it took three generations to replace them with an outlook that was both English and second nature.

The English Public School system, which has received an equal amount of applause and abuse, shares therein the fate of the social system of which it forms so intimate a part. Both are attacked or defended for the same reasons or from the same prejudices. All institutions that have evolved gradually and not been created *de novo* with an organization constructed for the attainment of foreseen ends are cemented by traditions that may be difficult to detect or describe and features that are obvious but the value of which is by no means clear. Their evolution has not been planned but has proceeded by trial and error. According to this system—or lack of it—only that which is directly or indirectly useful is retained. The element which is indirectly useful is one, neutral in value—senseless, if you will—but attached to something that is valuable by a mere process of conditioning.

But useful to whom? It can serve the ends of society as a whole, justify itself pragmatically and thus eventually confound the critics, or it can serve the ends only of the members of a class, constitute an unmerited privilege, an abuse, and be indefensible. The reactionary defender of a tradition takes his stand on the pragmatic test: the institution as a whole has demonstrable value, the tradition is part of the institution and therefore it must contribute its share of utility. This is similar to the argument that every structure in the human body has its function to perform, therefore the vermiform appendix is useful. The possibility of its being a vestigial remnant of a structure that has outlived its usefulness is excluded from consideration. The reforming critic assumes that everything is a useless accretion which



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has not an immediately obvious function. He is like the physiologist who would say that the pineal body in the brain was only a functionless relic of what, dim ages ago, was a third eye. But research in recent years has shewn that the pineal body does have its use.

It will be seen that contrary assumptions are tacitly made by these two types of observers. The reactionary assumes that we never can know enough to have a planned evolution. The reformer assumes that we already know all we need to know, that all that matters is what can be consciously seen and understood, or that we must assume our knowledge to be greater than our ignorance if we are to get on with the job at all. Neither of these positions is logically tenable and the dispassionate critic would like to take his stand midway between the antagonists. But where is that point? One can measure what one knows but not what one does not know. Where is half-way between a known point and an unknown one? A truly rational approach is therefore impossible. But the problem cannot therefore be abandoned. The physiologist may say, 'I know the human body is not perfect, but I am not going to try to remodel it until I know all about how it works', because his job is to explore and not to create or remake. But society is forced to tackle the problem of making or remaking its institutions.

Apparently the only way it can get on with this task is to oscillate between the programmes proposed by the extremists until some kind of an equilibrium is reached, in the hope that successive points of equilibrium will lie along a path that leads towards perfection. There are two types of progress in this evolution. One is with wide excursions from the path: abuses under a reactionary system accumulate until they are intolerable and there is a bloody, wasteful revolution; when the revolutionary excesses have been pruned away, the country may find itself much nearer to the goal. In the other type of progression there is continual compromise going on with small divagations from the central path, made at small expense, but achieving a correspondingly small progress. This is the English type in which 'Freedom

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*slowly* broadens down from precedent to precedent'. The English Public School system, like the social system which it both represents and fortifies, is a compromise and can only be understood as such. It is a compromise that spells national decay to the reactionary and abuse to the reformer.

An educational system has to be judged by the knowledge it imparts, the training it gives to thinking powers and the way it moulds character. Since the reformers would like to see the Public Schools abolished or taken over by the state and since the present economic trend would, if it continued, make one or other of these alternatives inevitable, our problem is to see, if we can, what effects these changes would have on the education now provided by the Public Schools. The change-over would not come, we may presume, under a reactionary government, so it would be reformers who would dictate the resultant changes in policy: these would be in the direction of substituting a planned system for a traditional one. What would be the result?

As to the inculcation of knowledge there would be no difference, or if there were any it would be in the direction of improvement. Adolescents have receptive minds and the task of school teachers is to teach facts more than it is to train boys to think. At the university level training is (or ought to be) preponderantly in the direction of thinking. Results of entrance scholarship examinations at the Universities shew that state-aided schools are if anything more efficient in inculcating facts than are the Public Schools. More of their pupils however, fade away under competition based on the ability to think about these facts which is required more and more from the undergraduate in the course of his University education. This would suggest either that the clientèle of the Public School is basically more intelligent, which is doubtful, or that there is some subtle element in its system which promotes independent thought. The latter is a much more acceptable view psychologically because independence is a temperamental, rather than an intellectual, quality. One has to have

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courage to think for one's self as well as the intelligence to do so. Training for independent thinking lies in the field intermediate between those of education in the narrow sense and in the wider sense which includes the development of character. So we may turn to the latter.

Character building rests on the facilitation or inhibition of influences that are essentially imponderable and therefore impossible to bring into any planned system with foresight of correct proportions. In other words, tradition is a dominant factor, but, since roughly the same ideal actuates all schools, they tend to conform to a general type. Trial and error evolution has meant that what did not conform to the ideal was eliminated, while whatever was consistent therewith has been retained. The ideal is for the production of an individual who should be able to assume responsibility, exercise it as would a perfect Englishman, and have the manners of his class, i.e. behave as would a gentleman in every sense of that term. A very leftist friend of mine once remarked to me, anent a discussion going on in the Press about the selection of Public School boys as cadets, that the polemic was silly: whatever vices this educational system might have, it ought certainly to turn out the officer type, for that was just what it was designed to do; that should be accepted as a fact and not argued about.

What is this system? In the first place it is communal. There is little privacy and little time for it: corporate activities in work and play and corporate discipline run for 24 hours in the day, in which one important differentiation from a day school appears. Corporate values rule rather than those belonging to life outside the school. Pocket money being kept within small limits, the economic factor produces no differentiation. There may be an extreme and adolescent snobbery in the belief that only those belonging to this particular school are decent people, but within the school itself rank goes with achievement. The son of a duke or of a millionaire who is undistinguished in work, play or hobbies, and who is not amusing, is just a

dull fellow and has no prestige. If he gathers to himself friends who are impressed by his title or prospective wealth these sycophants are stigmatized as toadies.

Within this little world there is always emulation, although the degree to which it extends is variable. In some schools the competitive spirit is strong and individuality is fostered; in others conformity is more highly stressed. But in either case the status of a boy rests on his performance. In a state-aided school achievement is restricted to studies or to prowess in whatever games are played with the facilities provided. In a Public School, however, where the school day is 24 hours long, any kind of interest, any kind of hobby, may be pursued so as to bring distinction—even adventurous mischief. As a result of compulsory games-playing, the reputation built up in the class-room may suffer diminution in the field, or vice versa, so that all-roundness is encouraged.

Most important of all, however, is the disciplinary system and the moral code. There are, of course, school rules established by the authorities—plenty of them—but with few exceptions their breaking entails a beating and there's an end to it. Moral obliquity attaches rather to doing 'what isn't done', an infraction of an unwritten, traditional code. This code is not that of the masters—except secondarily—but is that of the boys themselves. This, and the freedom given to boys in the maintenance of discipline, constitute what is, perhaps, the unique feature of English Public Schools. It is epitomized in the institution of fagging, which was thus defined by Dr Arnold: 'the power given by the authorities of the school to the Sixth Form, to be exercised by them over the lower boys, for the sake of securing a regular government among the boys themselves, and avoiding the evils of anarchy; in other words, of the lawless tyranny of brute force.' The fags have to run errands and perform various tasks for their masters, but the traffic does not go all one way. The older boy is not only the smaller one's disciplinarian, he is his adviser and his protector, and is responsible for his welfare. If a small boy is being

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bullied, he appeals not to one of the school masters but to his fag master. This system is, of course, supplemented by the supervision and discipline exercised by prefects and so on, details varying from school to school. In some schools the 'head of the house' may exercise a greater authority than he ever does in after life, even though he attains an important executive position. 'I also am a man set under authority' is the lesson learned by this training; one goes through a stage where menial service is given in deference to the all-coercive system rather than out of respect to the person of a senior boy: adaptation to a hierarchy is learnt. Then comes a stage where there is freedom from this service in virtue of mere seniority but privilege is attained only because of achievement and the authority going therewith involves responsibility for the house as a whole as well as the care of the younger boys. It is a world in miniature, a world of equal opportunity and free competition but controlled rigidly by a set of unwritten rules and subjugated ambition for success of the group as a whole.

Several comments may be made on this system.

In the first place, it is clear that it contains a potentiality for evil that would be absent in a school where discipline was solely in the hands of the teaching staff. Tradition rules, and traditions are fluid. If a bad lot of boys get into a house or a school, the tone may so deteriorate that nothing but drastic purging can save it—if at all. On the other hand, the freedom from external regulation is just that which makes the system so potent for good.

Secondly, the scheme works, and only can work, if a sufficient number of the boys come from homes where *noblesse oblige* and assumption of authority are taken as a matter of course. No one can adapt himself easily to Public School customs and traditions who is sensitive about his social position and regardful of his dignity, nor should he fear that he will be laughed at if he exercises authority. Similarly, if there is not a similarity in accent, bearing and manners, life in close and crowded quarters is apt to produce cliques of those

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who can get on well together. Inevitably, therefore, the authorities who regulate the entry will try to have as socially a homogeneous lot of boys as is possible. But there is a countervailing tendency. The schools are all in competition; apart from a trifling number of athletic fixtures, the relative status of the different schools in the eyes of the general public is settled by the achievements of the boys, first in the Universities to which they go and then in after life. So native ability is sought and this may be secured more effectively if the net is cast more widely. For this reason there are scholarships enabling those of smaller means to compete with those who have financial backing. If the Public School had been, as is often charged, just an institution for the maintenance and aggrandizement of a class, scholarships would be available only for the sons of old boys. But they are not. Scholarships are, indeed, an expression of what is the peculiar genius of English society: a class system but one that must be elastic.

At the present time, and since the last war, the upper classes are in the process of liquidation. Death duties and confiscatory taxation are seeing to that. The great majority of the people, that is the working classes, approve of social stratification and of an aristocracy. So, if the upper classes were subjected to a frontal attack, and decision were left to a plebiscite, they would probably be secure. But it is a flanking attack that is being made, deliberate in the policy of some politicians but unobserved by the mass of the people. If the process continues until its effects become obvious to everyone, there may be a swing of the pendulum. If there is, when equilibrium is re-established, conditions will not be what they were in the early part of this century. So, whether the movement is small or great, an evolution is in progress, and it may be worth while to speculate as to what its results may be. This is not irrelevant to our general theme because group behaviour in emergencies is determined both by its organization and its morale and these two factors interact on each other.

The liquidation of the upper classes is reflected in the bankruptcy

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of the Public Schools, threatened in all and already accomplished in some. Two things may happen: only a few may survive, which would break the system as a whole and probably leave the survivors as almost purely snob institutions; or public funds will be used to revive the moribund schools. The first would produce schools having a status closely similar to the private 'preparatory schools' in the United States. There, where there is no traditional upper class with traditions of public service, the schools that have been established in deliberate imitation of the English Public Schools have a deplorably snob character that militates against their value to the community. If the state, on the other hand, gives subventions and saves the Public Schools, there will be in operation two inevitable tendencies. Entry to those coming from the lower classes will be extended, which might do good rather than harm provided the increase did not produce an undigestible mass, with those of different social origin cliquing together; and policy will be modified by state control: regulation will tend to take the place of tradition. Both tendencies will affect the character of the average boy who will be going to the Universities in preparation for the direction of affairs either in business or in the government services. They will, to a greater extent, be those whose homes have provided them with too little of the tradition of authority and responsibility for it to be engrafted on them in a few brief years, while the schools themselves, governed more by an imposed educational theory than by 'playing the game', would be a weaker influence in the inculcation of the kind of spirit which makes efficient leaders.

Changes of this order are already occurring. After the last war, contrary to the expectation of many, the enrolment in the Universities did not diminish but increased. This was due, it was soon seen, to two factors. There were more state-aided scholars and students, these coming, of course, almost exclusively from the lower classes. The Public School entry increased because parents began to educate their sons out of capital instead of out of income as they had before 1914. The effect of this is inevitable. The changed financial policy is justified

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on the ground that a University education is a good investment. If an investment, it can only pay if the education means a better livelihood. The latter is not to be gained in government service, so those who previously chose that career have been going into business. The result has been a reduction in the proportion of Public School men in the services, a tendency aggravated by a policy that has deliberately encouraged it. To what extent this has been the cause of a growing departmentalism and slackness in administration will inevitably be unprovable and remain a matter of prejudiced judgment. But that it is a factor that has been in operation during the period between the two wars is undeniable. To insist that this must be the cause of the deterioration is to adopt *post hoc ergo propter hoc* logic.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of reducing the relative number of upper-class entrants to the services must be to increase the proportion of those coming from the lower middle class. This stratum has some characteristics that are deleterious. It contains those who have slipped back from the upper middle class and are clinging grimly to gentility and those who are rising, or trying to rise, in the social scale. Both groups are, naturally, dissatisfied with their status and they constitute a sufficient proportion of the whole to give to this class certain characteristics. They are sensitive to social slights and aggressive because they consider themselves superior to the status granted them: either their families are 'better' or their ambition for elevation makes them consider themselves as deserving a status that is not accorded them. If they are on the down grade, they fear destitution, if they are on the up grade they have memories of the wage-earners' vicissitudes and have a dread of returning to a state where livelihood is dependent

<sup>1</sup> Another factor is, probably, a result of the 'war of nerves'. Members of Parliament have not been totally ignorant of, or indifferent to, weaknesses of administration, particularly in the Colonies. But Hitler was saying that the British people had deteriorated and that its Empire was collapsing. So there was shyness about the ventilation of scandals that would seem to justify Hitler's gibes. Besides, the problem of direct national defence was obsessive—too obsessive to be tackled with sane resolution and too obsessive to allow of problems of internal fortification to be considered.



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on the whim of employers or the vagaries of trade cycles. They wish to be 'independent' and become obsessed with the need for security. Security takes on for them a moral quality that is incomprehensible to those who have never known real destitution or seen it just around the corner. Loyalty, for instance, to the terms of employment, implicit or explicit, is not allowed to compete with the necessity for security. They are the rats who leave a ship whenever there is a leak and without waiting to see if the ship will sink or the leak can be stopped. They are not cowards in the physical sense and will make as good soldiers as any others but they will never gamble with livelihood.

So they make ideal timber for the construction of departmentalism: they seek a civil service career for the sake of the security it offers and eschew independence of action lest it should jeopardize livelihood.<sup>1</sup> This fatal conformity to departmental routine is inevitable among those who worship security. They wrap themselves in red-tape as in a garment, not as in enslaving bonds. Closely related to this is another, and definitely social, factor. The upper-class government servant has a social, and therefore a moral, backing that lies outside the department. He can afford to be morally independent so long as what he does conforms to the standards of his class. But the lower middle class, either of the 'genteel' or the climbing type, has no class with which he is in comfortable conformity. He has no moral backing except such as he may secure from his fellow employees. So for this reason too he is forced to fit himself into the departmental mould.

<sup>1</sup> Self-abnegation in the service of moral ideals seems to be a kind of luxury that develops in conditions of unchallenged security. The English people as a whole have it in larger measure than their Continental neighbours because their country has never been invaded: we can afford idealism because it has never threatened our existence. This factor is most strikingly exhibited among Jews. The most violent anti-semitism (of a kind) is to be found here to-day among those Jews, long anglicized, whose pride it has been to demonstrate the probity of Jewry. Now they find the good name of their race besmirched by the knavery of Jewish refugees. But the latter are merely continuing in sharp practices without which for many generations they could not have survived in the communities from which they have come. The 'good' Jews are in terror of the development here of a real anti-semitism.

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Finally, the 'climbers' are naturally the very stuff that careerists are made of. Of course there are careerists in every social stratum, but the one who is not of, or of the class of, a Public School is more likely to seek power uninhibited by a revulsion from 'what isn't done'.

Some of the changes consequent on the liquidation of the upper classes have already appeared. How far is the evolution likely to go? In general terms the answer is simple and can be given confidently; until the changes thus brought about become so striking as to appear revolutionary. At that point the great British public, which hates revolution, will call a halt and probably not only stop the direction in which the pendulum is swinging but start it on a reverse path. There is, however, a considerable chance that the change is a long way off still and this for two reasons. First, there has not been, and probably never will be, a dramatic confiscation of capital. It is happening so gradually as to be imperceptible to those, the majority, whom it does not directly affect. Secondly, there is no organization for fighting against the dispossession of the upper classes. The Left is organized for the fight but the Right is not, for the simple reason that the Right represents a bias in general national policy and not the interests of a class. The upper classes are not, individually, class conscious: they accept their status unquestioningly, their code is essentially one of national service and if it, in a vague way, includes a bias towards maintenance of the *status quo* this is not formulated so as to include defence of class 'rights'.

The other supporters of the aristocratic organization of society, the working classes, are not consulted. They have their representatives in Parliament, of course, but the whole principle of representative government is that, apart from instructions given by the electorate on specific election issues, the representative is supposed to use his personal judgment. When a trade unionist enters politics, he ceases to be a wage-earner and he inevitably enters a higher social class. He will fight the battles of labour, but he tends to lose the wage-

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earner's attitude towards society as a whole. In Parliament he assumes the attitude of his Party colleagues and, to defend the interests of the working-man, joins in an assault on 'vested interests' and becomes a protagonist in a class warfare of which his constituents might disapprove. A coalition between the Conservative Party and the Trade Unions might end all this and, indeed, inaugurate a period of unfortunate reaction.

I say 'unfortunate', because all violent changes are painful and expensive and because too much power in the hands of any group leads inevitably to abuses of that power. Besides, the country probably gets the maximum out of the upper classes when they are subjected to pressure, are stimulated by economic need. A proof of this lies in the fact that an extraordinarily large number of our leaders to-day are sons of parsons. Why? It is highly improbable that priests of the Church of England are more intelligent than other professional men and transmit to their offspring an inheritable ability. But they are, traditionally, gentlemen and they have, actually, stipends little better than the wages of skilled mechanics. The combination produces a will to exploit what abilities they have to the limit. They get their education through scholarships and they go—not to the poverty of the vicarage—but to industry, the academic world, or government service. Their careers shew at once the value of economic pressure and that it can go too far. The problem of finding new clergy whom the bulk of the parish will respect except for their piety is well-nigh insoluble. In another generation the son of the parson will not be so important a man because he will have come from a class that has no tradition of public service.

Whither then, if this liquidation goes on?

One change will be a shift from voluntary to paid service, which will involve more than is usually realized. One effect of the tradition of service in the upper classes has been that a lot of work for the community has been done for nothing or has been paid for by private citizens. There are the non-stipendiary magistrates, the voluntary

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hospitals responsible for all the clinical teaching of medical students, schools which relieve the state of a considerable fraction of its responsibility in universal education, innumerable charities which share the country's burden in support of the unemployed. These are organized private agencies. There are, in addition, numerous private citizens who give their time and specialized abilities as consultants, members of Royal Commissions and so on. If income tax and death duties continue on anything like their present scale it will not be long before there will be no more savings and making a living will be a whole-time job for everybody. Then all these gifts to the state will, perforce, cease and the services thus rendered will come under bureaucratic control. In some respects this may mean an improvement, but it will certainly mean a considerable change in the structure of government, for there is no other country in the world where civic needs have been met so largely by private endeavour. This process began, of course, some time ago with the payment of Members in the House of Commons. How difficult it is to assess the relative gains and losses in this socialistic drift is seen in the violently opposed views that are expressed as to the results of that change.

As it goes further the civil services will be expanded and the number of upper-class people available as recruits will be diminished rather than increased. Inevitably, therefore, government departments will come more and more under the control of those drawn from the lower classes. This will not, as might be supposed, mean drawing on a larger source of brain power, because already the system of scholarships is on so generous a scale that any one with a bit more than average ability can get a practically free higher education no matter how poor he may be. There will be an increase of departmentalism and careerism because the ethics of the upper classes tend to cut across these tendencies while those of the lower classes do not. There will also, of course, be a diminution of efficiency because, as I have argued, organizations must inevitably become less efficient as they grow larger and increased government work will mean larger

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organizations. All this sounds very pessimistic, but that may be due to omitting from our survey the influence of other developments which may mitigate the disaster.

Some of the unfortunate characteristics of the lower middle class are due to a sense of inferiority. However, if not just one boy with brains but no social backing wins his way into a circle that is 'above' him but many do, if, indeed, the proportions are reversed, then the feeling of inferiority will tend to lapse. This adjustment may begin at the school level. Already many Grammar Schools are trying hard, and with some success, to introduce the Public School system of discipline. Further progress along this line would tend to make the boy more self-reliant, less given to violent compensations. Similarly, if 'levelling' takes place slowly enough in the state-aided Public Schools of the hypothetical future, more of those from the lower ranks who attend them will get their desirable character training. But there is a still more important environmental change to be reckoned with. The Englishman whose ability brings him into a higher social level than that of his family is much more *difficile* than is his analogue in Scotland, the Dominions or the United States. If the upper classes diminish in number until they become little snobbish groups at which one can afford to laugh, the no longer lower middle class success will have less reason to brood over a (usually) delusional belief that everybody is watching to see how he behaves and, behind his back, is laughing at him.

There is one institution which might go a long way towards reducing class antagonism. That hostility was born of the Industrial Revolution and even now is relatively unimportant in rural districts. The squire's family and the villagers do not eye each other like strange dogs because they know each other and know they both belong to a common community. It is urban life which has, inevitably, broken the contact between employer and employed. When their sons meet in a conscript army, they have no difficulty in understanding each other. Why should not conscription continue, the conscripts forming

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pioneer battalions engaged in public works? A few months' manual labour is an invaluable bit of education in itself, and if it did no more than reveal the classes to each other as human beings, the solidarity of the state would be greatly enhanced.

In one respect the lapse of the caste stratification of society would mean a definite loss. Fluids of different specific gravities stirred up in a vessel will, if immiscible, quickly separate out into different levels. They spontaneously organize themselves, so to speak. And thus it is with Englishmen. Obedience to authority because it is all part of a system is bred in the Englishman's bones. In an emergency a fortuitous group of Englishmen look about for the squire or for somebody of the squire's class to be their leader. They do not imagine that he is necessarily more intelligent or more intrepid than anybody else, but somebody must lead and an accepted social system decrees that somebody from the upper classes should do so. This is one of the most important factors in the general orderliness of Englishmen. In the Dominions, in the States, in fact in all countries where there is no effective caste system, people follow those whose ability they respect and tend to postpone obedience until the superiority has been demonstrated. Dominion troops are gallant, they are resourceful, but it takes a long, long time to make them into a disciplined body. Months before the invasion of France, when discussing this problem, I predicted that the French—civilians at least—would panic in the emergency of invasion simply because they had a society lacking an aristocratic organization. The French place a high value on intelligence and are much more logical than we. They will follow an intelligent man, but who can hold a competitive examination during an invasion?

In summary, one might say that if the upper classes are liquidated, bureaucracy will increase as the caste system declines. Whether this will work for better or for ill, who can say? But at least we may be sure that there will be less democracy in the proper sense of that term—the bureaucrats will see to that. The bulwark of democracy and

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the enemy of bureaucracy is an elastic caste system. The reverse terms could be used of a rigid one.

That a rigid class system should be inimical to democracy is obvious and that very obviousness is likely to mask the significance of the qualification 'rigid'. If democracy means the social equality of all who live in the community, then either rulers and ruled will feel themselves socially on the same level—which is something not yet observed in human societies—or else there will be no rule at all. Democracy in the latter sense is, as I have already noted, really anarchy. But people are prone to forget these facts and to give to the word 'democracy' the meaning of social equality. Democracy must really refer to representative government or the word loses all utility. If this be so the question is whether the choice of representatives preponderantly from one social class facilitates, or militates against, the expression of the people's will and the service of their interest. If a 'governing class' has a tradition of public service and demands no more privilege than is a fair return for services rendered, then the community is better served by representatives drawn from this class than from others which lack that tradition. One must never forget that the governing circles will always form a privileged class once they govern—there is no getting away from the tendency to social segregation. The question is whether it is advantageous or not to have segregation antedate the assumption of governmental function or to follow it. If the former, the traditions of the ruling class prepare and educate the governor for his responsibilities. If the class is rigidly hereditary it will inevitably tend to regard its privileges as 'rights' and become arrogant and tyrannical. But, if ability can always secure entrance for the family—if not for the individual—into this class, then such a system gives to the state the double advantages of tradition and ability. Without tradition—that is if the governing class gains its social kudos merely because it is governing—there is no stability in policy. Consistency in expression of the country's ethos is thus dependent on there being a ruling class. Its existence

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may imperil true democracy, but its elasticity will guarantee it. The problem then is (or should be) not, should we have a ruling class, but, how can we recruit new blood into it and exclude that which has deteriorated? So far the pruning knife of discriminative taxation has been the only device for removing the unfit. Surely some better implement can be found.



## CHAPTER II

### *SCIENCE AND AUTHORITY*

THERE is another topic to be discussed in connection with organization. This is the utilization of highly specialized training and skill, particularly the exploitation of the country's scientists. For many years we have heard complaints that our industries are not served by science as those of other countries are and now that we are in a war where inventiveness is at a premium the Government employment of scientists is an acute problem. The way that academic scientists in Germany have worked hand in hand with her industrialists in the past is well known, but it is not so well known that, since the Nazis came into power, there has been no professorial appointment made that did not involve part-time work for the government. Here, however, industry has not profited as it might have done from the scientists available to help it, while up to the outbreak of the present war—and even since then in many instances—a good many distinguished scientists who offered assistance were snubbed or found their suggestions rejected by officials who were incompetent to judge of their value. How can such things be?

There are two general causes which operate to produce this sad state of affairs: one is a defect—perhaps inevitable—in organization, while the other, an outcome of this, is the character of government technicians. In any hierarchical organization those in authority are administrators and the higher the level, the greater is the demand for executive ability. Furthermore, as we have seen, policy is determined at the top and liaison between the policy-makers at the top and the ones who do the ultimate jobs at the bottom is a very difficult thing to achieve. Exactly this problem complicates the exploitation of science by any large organization.

Let us take the case of a bright young chemist who enters the service of a large chemical firm. He is hired to do research and, if he sticks

## *THE TECHNICIAN IN BUSINESS OR THE SERVICES*

at this, he may hope to get eventually £1000, perhaps even £2000 a year. To non-chemists his opinion is worth what is paid for it. If, now, as often happens, the young man is seen to have executive ability he is shifted gradually over into administration and is soon wholly absorbed in it. As an executive he climbs and climbs, becomes eventually a director, even the head of the company and earns, let us say, £10,000 a year. His opinion is now worth five or ten times what it was when he was acting as a research chemist, but, in the meantime he has forgotten his chemistry, or at least has had no time to keep abreast of the subject. So he may turn down a proposal the potentialities of which he cannot realize or spend money on something the value of which was disproved a year before. His fellow directors have the benefit of his advice on technical matters, but it may be dangerous advice. Inevitably, too, because this is only human nature, he tends to confuse in his own mind his gain in judgment in administrative problems with the validity of his judgment in matters technical. Let us suppose, however, that he has little executive ability and is offered no administrative responsibility, or, as is most likely with a really keen scientist, that administration bores him and he will have none of it. So he sticks to his work as a chemist and the directors have no one to advise them on technical matters when policy has to be decided and conflicting claims are presented to them. He sticks—and gets stuck. He is burdened with routine analyses or is prevented in following up a promising line of research because his superiors think it will not be profitable. He breaks his heart and deteriorates, or he gets out, if he can.

The same kind of thing occurs with professional work in the military services. A doctor, for instance, who is interested in clinical work finds that promotion to any high rank means unavoidably an abandonment of patients in favour of administrative work, and—which is the important thing from the point of view of utilizing professional skill—the validity of one's judgment is proportionate to one's rank. Inevitably the most important decisions involving scien-

## *SECOND RATE OFFICIAL SCIENTISTS*

tific discriminations are made by those who have lost touch with the science in question. By the time an officer has become an admiral, a general, or an air marshal, equipment he has never worked with has come into service.

The result of this custom of putting scientists into a hierarchically organized service or business is that, their fate becoming known, good men do not want to suffer in the same way and the posts go to second-raters. The prizes most sought are academic posts, then comes industry which at least offers a possible financial reward if not an opportunity for doing interesting research work, and as third choice there are the positions in government service either civil or military. There are, of course, exceptions. There are some firms which have an enlightened policy in regard to research work and some government laboratories where the atmosphere is quite 'academic'. But as a rule the generalization holds.

What is the effect of the employment of second-rate scientists? Here again the situations in industry and in the services are similar. The less able a man is the fewer are the positions open to him and therefore the more important it is for him to retain the job he already has. He is therefore fearful of criticism and jealous of those whose abilities make them more independent. A man is employed to do research for a company or for a government service, but is also expected to give expert advice to his employers. If, now, an outsider offers some new device, some new process, what happens? The firm or service naturally asks its technical expert for a report on it and he is placed in a dilemma. If he says it is good, he may be criticized for not having made the invention himself. If he says it is bad something of value may be lost. A rogue will find various ways of solving this problem, but we are not interested in rogues. There are too few of them to matter and they are too easily caught. The menace is the man whose conscience is clear but who cheats unconsciously, and his name is legion. The scientist's problem would be much easier if the proposed invention was impractical. Consequently his testing of

## *INCOMPATIBILITY OF HIERARCHY AND SCIENCE*

the device or process is biased: he misreads the directions or he does not apply common sense in interpreting them; he is careless or clumsy in his manipulations; he guesses that it may work on a laboratory scale but not on a large one; it is something which might work in the hands of an expert but is unfit for general use; it is too complicated for quantity production; it would require materials that are not readily available. There are countless excuses that can be found for an adverse report. No amount of faith can turn a sow's ear into a silk purse, but incredulity can accomplish the reverse.

The scientist recommends that the proposal be rejected and his report is accepted by the department concerned. Then other factors come into play. No longer is it just the reputation of the scientist that is at stake, it is now the status of the department that is involved in the decision. Review of the matter is blocked by all the ingenious obstructiveness that departmentalism can evolve. If it is a government matter and if the outsider who has made the invention is somebody of influence, a full-dress investigation may eventually be made and the invention adopted only when high officials have been sacked. This, however, involves a delay that lasts at least a year—while the war goes on.

I have argued that departmentalism tends always to develop in large hierarchical organizations. In Germany where executive and scientific authority are combined in the Universities in a pyramiding organization, departmentalism becomes a 'school', a theory stubbornly held by one group of academics. Our Universities are, fortunately, almost entirely free from this vice, but it does appear in large government laboratories. Corporate feeling inhibits scientific open-mindedness even when the personnel is really highly competent. Then the laboratory in question will pursue its own ideas with enthusiasm but will eschew all those emanating from outside unless they can be stolen and rechristened.

There is another way in which departmentalism may prevent the public from enjoying the advantages of scientific advance—even

## INCOMPATIBILITY OF

when that has been made by the use of public funds. A government laboratory may invent a new method or new device the use of which would contravene regulations set up by another government department. These regulations may not be relaxed even though their modification would be advantageous and obviously so. Let us suppose—I purposely choose a wildly hypothetical example—that government bacteriologists discover a simpler, cheaper and more efficient method of sewage disposal than that now in operation. Its adoption would, however, mean a radical change in the specifications for sewage disposal now in force. The Ministry of Health, or the Department of Public Works, or whatever bureau is involved, will refuse to modify its rules. Their regulations are the life and soul of the department; they are sacrosanct; to modify them would be derogatory to their authority.

There is another way in which an innovation may be suppressed; it looks monstrous when baldly described, but a little scrutiny shews how apt it is to occur. Inventions are adopted if they cost a lot of money but neglected if they are bought cheaply or received as gifts. This is something that occurs with terrible frequency both in business and in government services. It results from two tendencies. One is just a natural human failing. We all tend to judge quality by price. The other is the necessity, in any organization, of justifying expenditure. An example will shew how these vicious tendencies operate. Two inventors bring to a firm or to a government service two inventions. Both represent a distinct advance on anything yet known, but that made by Jones is undoubtedly better than that of Smith. Smith, however, is more of a business man than is Jones. Jones offers his device for a small price or for nothing if it be the government that would acquire it. Each invention is too good for it to be allowed to fall into the hands of rivals, commercial or national. So both must be secured. Some individual or some subdepartment is responsible for the decision to take both. There is no trouble about getting the rights to Jones's invention: it can be bought out of petty cash. Smith,

## *HIERARCHY AND SCIENCE*

however, demands a price which can be paid only if higher authority is secured. Application is made to the directors or to the Treasury, as the case may be, and the circumstances necessitating the purchase are explained. The invention of Jones may be mentioned casually or it may not, probably not because it is likely to prove a red herring. (If it is mentioned the authorities may become doubtful of the necessity of keeping Smith's device out of the hands of rivals, although the technical experts know how vital this is.) The expenditure is then authorized and both are secured. Which will be actually developed? That of Smith, and for a very simple reason. If a year, or five years, later the directors or the Treasury learn that no use has been made of Smith's invention and another one is being manufactured, they turn on the luckless expert and say: 'You are wilfully extravagant or you don't know your business; why do you spend vast sums of money on things you just put down in the cellar?' This kind of thing happens so often that some of those who have had large experience give this advice: if you have an idea for something that will help the country win the war, don't give it to the government if you want to see it adopted. With great immodesty make impressive claims for it and demand a high price. (During an actual war the government can take anything it likes without compensation. But there are forms of payment in addition to that of immediate cash.)

What of remedies for these ills? The tendencies discussed are, of course, inevitable and therefore ineradicable. But that does not mean that operation of the tendencies cannot be curtailed. As always, the major improvement will result when there is insight as to the nature of the disease so that men of good will can fight it. But there is also a possibility of improvements in organization. So far as is possible technical, professional, scientific service should be divorced from rank, at least from rank that is based on administrative authority. The scientist whose value rests on his special knowledge and intelligence ought to be able to talk with equal authority to the Director or the workman, to the General or the private.

## CHAPTER 12

### *LIAISON AND GERMAN MAN-POWER*

THE general direction of all this discussion of organization problems has been critical. Since most of the examples have been British and since we are all more interested in local application of principles that may really be universal, it may seem as if the discussion was likely to spread alarm and despondency more than it would aid, through added insight, to a solution of urgent problems. But the story is not all told. What matters in war is not the absolute but the relative strengths of the combatants. We should be fools if we failed to realize that Germany probably began the war with a superiority in organization. But is she going to maintain it? I think not: not at least on the home front. Changes in purely military organization I am incompetent to discuss for lack of facts. If I knew the facts, it would be improper to disclose them. But certain tendencies in both this country and in Germany which must affect internal organization are revealed in data known to anyone who reads the daily press.

As we have seen, the inevitable evils in large-scale organization may be mitigated in two ways: by an increase in channels of liaison and by improvement in the character and intelligence of officials. At the beginning of the war the enemy probably had the advantage of us in both of these respects for reasons already given, but the struggle has developed in such a way as to reverse this superiority. How has Germany suffered on its home front?

First she must be suffering from a man-shortage. This results from two drains. The more countries she has occupied, the more her man-power resources must be strained in holding down the populations and exploiting the available assets. Leaving aside the regular troops, this means that technical experts are withdrawn from home production and the activities of the Gestapo are extended. The latter

### *LIMITED SUPPLY OF TECHNICIANS AND GESTAPO*

is important. The Gestapo was organized, quite frankly, for the control by force of the German civilian population. At a time when it was realized that modern warfare demanded a co-operation that could not be achieved by coercion, the army system was changed but the Gestapo was left in charge of civilians. The Gestapo to be efficient must be composed of men who combine intelligence, ruthlessness and incorruptibility. In any country there must be a limit to the supply of those who combine these qualities. The more foreign territory Germany has to organize and the more disaffection there is there, the more Gestapo she has to export.

There is, however, another drain on her supply of officials. The casualties in Russia are depleting the army and it has the first call. Not unnaturally, more experts of various kinds are being taken from civilian life to fill the ranks in Russia. Who will go first? Obviously those who seem the least essential. If there are two units and three available officers each one of whom is capable of command, there can be two commanders and one liaison officer. If one has to be deducted, the liaison officer will be the one to be withdrawn. His absence will produce no immediately observable calamity, but the activity of the two units can no longer be integrated. So Russia will first take from the home front those officials who have had a purely liaison function. But this is not all.

As I have endeavoured to shew, paper work is liaison work. We are told recently (April 1942) that industrialists in Germany are now complaining that their work is hampered by too much paper work and that steps are being taken to reduce it. This is good news indeed. Are we to suppose that the Germans with their genius for organization who have been engaged on munitions production for a decade or more and who have organized the whole country to this end for the past six years, have only now discovered some fifth wheels? Not a bit of it. It means that each industrialist is suffering from a man-shortage and in his desperation wants to take men away from liaison work and put them into direct production. If that goes on, it will



## *SACRIFICE OF LIAISON OFFICIALS*

only be a matter of time before the units in a highly complicated system will get out of step. Bottlenecks will appear and factories will be idle because of absence of essential supplies. The trouble is cumulative.

A secondary result of man-power shortage is qualitative rather than quantitative. The evils of departmentalism are curbed by men of initiative who can override regulations and departmental traditions. The first line of defence is the army, the second is production at home. The army personnel will be kept up to full strength no matter what happens to the civilian services. So, as casualties mount up, there will be repeated comb-outs of those not yet in uniform. Of course key-men are left at their civilian tasks, but what constitutes a key-man? The standard will inevitably be raised until it includes only the very highest grade of executives and scientists.

Most important of all, however, is the effect on civilian morale of these factors added to a strain which Nazi policy has placed preferentially on civilians. We are inclined to think that 'total war' means the use of every possible weapon. But to the German it means much more a totality of effort on the part of every man, woman and child in the country. The distinction in theory between soldiers and civilians goes: all are engaged in the same struggle. They should, therefore, all be treated equally. But here is where Nazi theory and practice part company. Inevitably the combatants have to receive preferential treatment in some respects and will get it in any country, but Hitler has decreed that this preference shall be exaggerated. One of his rationalizations to escape the ignominious admission that Germany suffered a military defeat in 1918 has been that the army was let down by the home front. This, he has announced, will not be allowed to occur again. So, if there are privations to be suffered, it will not be by the soldiers. Was he not a common soldier himself, does he not know? he has dramatically asked. What is this going to mean for the German home front? We have already seen one aspect of the discrimination in the appeal for warm garments: there was no

## CRIPPLING OF HOME FRONT

pretence of taking what was not needed at home; that which was needed must be given to those whose needs were greater. But discrimination began a very long time ago indeed and had to do with something more important than clothes.

As we have seen earlier, the Germans have realized that rigid hierarchical discipline is inimical to the initiative that modern war demands, so their military systems were altered, bringing 'human contact' into a prominent place in the relation of officers to men. But this was accompanied by no such sympathetic treatment of civilians. Their organization was left to Himmler and the Gestapo. If I think that this discrepancy will eventually disintegrate the German home front, I am uttering an opinion that is not new. As long ago as 1936 a German psychologist, Pinschovius, wrote a book on *The Power of Mental Resistance in Modern War* in which he said: 'In view of the terrible nature of total war, it has become impossible to enforce the people's will-to-sacrifice indefinitely. It can be done, perhaps, in the beginning, but later on it is foolish to threaten men with court-martial. Men who have become demoralized under the stress of total war are not afraid of courts-martial. . . . Total war is much more likely to prove our curse than our salvation.'

Apart from the coercion applied to German civilians and not to their soldiers, civilians must always be subject to a more uninterrupted strain than are soldiers—and are less able to bear it. Soldiers have to be fit, fit enough to go through most arduous physical exertions and retain a capacity for rapid, powerful movements. Those with physical blemishes cannot do this; they are excluded from the army after medical examination. But an exhausted army is a beaten one, and no battalion is kept in the front line indefinitely. It is given periods of rest at short intervals. Civilian forces, however, which include those who are physically not up to par, do not have to be kept in the pink of condition, they may be worked steadily. As a result they are liable to the effects of continuous strains rather than the ardours of the battle-field. The results of protracted strain are not

## *GERMAN CIVILIAN COLLAPSE*

shewn in sudden, dramatic collapse but in susceptibility to infection, gradual loss of working capacity, invalidism, nervous breakdown and, above all, in a longing for a relief from the strain that becomes obsessive until it produces mutiny, revolt, or at least a defeatism which makes loss of the war seem more endurable than a continuance of the strain.

The majority of these symptoms are psychological in origin, occurring first in those of a neurotic disposition and last in 'normal' people. The liability of a population to these ills will therefore depend in part on the proportion of neurotics it contains. Having had a long time to prepare for this war, the Germans were able to give all their recruits extensive psychological tests on the basis of which many were rejected. Following this all those who did not fit into military life were also thrown out. The army has gained by this while the civil population has had to do its best with an increased number of maladapted individuals. These will become malcontents, will immobilize a fair proportion of Himmler's army in keeping them quiet, but will have their revenge on him by clogging the war effort as only a sullen neurotic can do. This is the population, over-driven, deprived more and more of its comforts and harried by the Gestapo that is now being bombed on an ever-increasing scale. They are too cowed to revolt and have no leaders to engineer rebellion; but can they maintain an organization so vast that it can function efficiently only if it is regulated by intricate planning of skilful officials and is backed by a frenzied zeal for co-operation on the part of all who participate in it?

Now in respect to all these factors we are in a better position. Granted that we began the war with a much poorer organization, we may nevertheless claim that matters have improved rather than deteriorated since then. We began, fortunately, with conscription and the exemption from military service of those with many specialized abilities. The tendency has been to withdraw more from the military services back into civilian occupations rather than the other way

### *GERMAN CIVILIAN COLLAPSE*

round. Experience—much needed—is being gained in organization and there are signs that liaison is improving (although with a maddening slowness); under the fire of criticism some pruning of undesirables has been done—even some very high officials have been sacked for obstructiveness. There is of course overwork, but people are now beginning to realize that rest and recuperation are necessities and the Government has re-learned the lesson of the last war that there are economic limits to working hours and has taken appropriate action. Bombing is, for the moment at least, of a merely casual kind and the people, having survived a good dose of it, are not paralysed with terror at the thought of its recurrence. In a word everything points in England as directly towards an improvement in the activities of the civilian population as it does in Germany towards their decay. Hitler's phobia of a breakdown at home is likely, as so many delusional ideas are prone to do, to validate itself in a perverse way. What was only part of a general collapse in 1918 is, I think, likely to be a dominant factor in this war. German civilian organization will disintegrate before her armies have broken either physically or spiritually.



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